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F. W. Griffiths.

UNDER THE

ESPECIAL PATRONAGE

OF

HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY,

THE QUEEN.

THE

SACRED CLASSICS:

OR,

Cabinet Library of Divinity.

EDITED BY

THE REV. R. CATTERMOLE, B.D.

AND

THE REV. H. STEBBING, M.A.

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MDCCCXXXVI.

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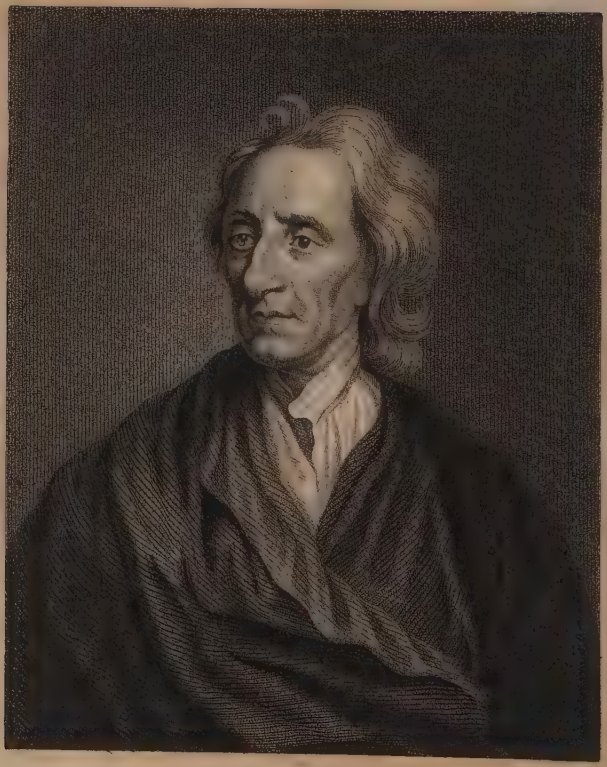

JOHN LOCKE.

Engraved by Freeman from a
Painting by Sir Godfrey Kneller.

THE REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY,

AS DELIVERED IN

THE SCRIPTURES.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

AN ESSAY ON THE UNDERSTANDING OF ST. PAUL'S EPISTLES;

AND

A DISCOURSE ON MIRACLES.

BY JOHN LOCKE.

WITH A

BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY, AN APPENDIX,

AND NOTES,

BY A LAYMAN.

LONDON:

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MDCCCXXXVI.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

THOUGH it is by no means our design to present the reader, on the present occasion, with a complete biography of Locke, it may perhaps be useful, before we come to a consideration of the Reasonableness of Christianity, to glance, in a cursory manner, at the principal circumstances of his life, which was strikingly marked by sudden vicissitudes and mutations of fortune. This distinguished philosopher, the elder of two sons, was born at Wrington, in Somersetshire, on the 29th of August, 1632. He probably imbibed from his earliest years a hatred of arbitrary power, his father having, during the civil wars, been an officer in the Republican army; which, on the Restoration, caused considerable detriment to his fortunes. Locke, received from the beginning, a very superior education; and, though treated with much strictness while a boy, was gradually, as he grew up, permitted to share the friendship of his father,

whom he loved with more than ordinary affection. He was sent, at an early age, to Westminster School; from whence, in 1651, he removed to Christ-church, Oxford, of which the celebrated independent, Dr. Owen, was then Dean.

The scholastic philosophy, based upon an imperfect interpretation of the works of Aristotle, which, at that period, prevailed in our universities, excited his aversion. He therefore, for some time, directed his studies into a different channel, and employed himself in acquiring that intimate knowledge of classical literature, which afterwards, when he came to write, enabled him to rival the first authors of modern times in the perspicuity and masculine beauties of his style. Contrary to what might have been expected, his university friends were not selected from among those of learned and studious habits; he preferred, it is said, the lively and agreeable; and his early manner of writing is not free from those sallies of affectation, mistaken by the vulgar for wit, which may be supposed best to have pleased such companions; indeed his recent biographer, Lord King, compares the style of his youthful correspondence to that of Voiture.

The love of philosophy was at length awakened in his mind by the works of Descartes; but, instead of adopting the ingenious system of that writer, then exceedingly popular among the learn-

ed, he betook himself to the assiduous study of the sciences, more particularly of medicine, in which he made so great a proficiency that, but for the feebleness of his constitution, it is probable he would ultimately have practised as a physician. Sydenham, in physic the greatest name perhaps of modern times, speaks of him, in the dedication prefixed to his "Observations on the History and Cure of Acute Diseases," as his most intimate friend, and as a man who, for genius, penetration, and exact judgment, had scarcely any superior, and few equals, among his contemporaries. It was not without reason, therefore, that he valued the approbation bestowed by Locke on his method of cure, which still continues to be regarded as a model; but from this circumstance to infer, as Dugald Stewart has done, that the merit of this method belonged in part to the philosopher, hardly appears to be warranted.

On the Restoration, in 1660, Locke, then in his twenty-eighth year, wrote a political work, not wholly unimbued with the spirit of the times, which his maturer judgment condemned to oblivion. His merit having now procured him many friends, he was chosen, in 1664, to accompany, as secretary, Sir Walter Vane, envoy to the elector of Brandenburgh; and from Cleves, where he chiefly resided during his stay abroad, amused his friends with lively descriptions of the Christmas mummeries of

the Roman Catholics, of Calvinistic logicians, and Dutch poets; in which he exhibited more vivacity than good taste. Returning to England early in the spring of 1665, he rejected an offer, the accepting of which might have permanently engaged him in the career of diplomacy; nor could an invitation to enter the Church, with very flattering prospects made in the following year, by a friend, prevail on him to relinquish his personal freedom and independence, which he regarded as the first of blessings.

Emancipated from all professional pursuits, he continued the study of medicine, and entered with his characteristic enthusiasm for knowledge, into a course of experimental philosophy. At this period he would appear to have been sometimes consulted by his friends and others as a physician; and to his knowledge of medicine he owed his introduction to the Earl of Shaftesbury, then Lord Ashley, with whom, notwithstanding the veering politics of that celebrated man, he maintained a friendship interrupted only by death. Lord Ashley, who was suffering from an abscess in his breast, came to drink the waters of Astrop at Oxford, where Locke then resided. He had written to Dr. Thomas to procure the waters for him on his arrival, but this physician happening to be called away, requested Locke to execute the commission. Through the negligence of the messenger sent to

procure them, the waters however were not ready, and Locke waited upon his Lordship to explain. Satisfied with the apology, and charmed by his conversation, Lord Ashley expressed his desire to improve an acquaintance thus accidentally commenced; and the friendship with which he was honoured by Locke, is perhaps the strongest presumptive proof existing that his character contained the elements of many good and excellent qualities.

From Oxford Locke accompanied Lord Ashley to Sunning-hill Wells, and afterwards resided some time with him at Exeter-house in the Strand, where he occasionally enjoyed the society of the Duke of Buckingham, Lord Halifax, and other distinguished men, who appeared to delight in his superior style of conversation. From an anecdote related by Le Clerc, however, it would seem that those noblemen sometimes took refuge from philosophy in the most frivolous pastimes: for several of their number once meeting at Lord Ashley's, sat down somewhat abruptly at the card-table; upon which Locke, taking out his tablets, began attentively to write, lifting up his eyes, and regarding them from time to time. Observing him thus occupied, one of the party inquired what he was writing? To which Locke replied, that being greatly desirous of profiting by their lordships' discourse, he supposed he could not be better em-

ployed than in registering the wise sayings which dropped from persons who were esteemed the greatest wits of the age. And thereupon he read the notes he had been making. Finding they appeared to no great advantage in the philosopher's report, the card-table was abandoned, and the remainder of the evening given up to conversation; an amusement more worthy of rational creatures.

Lord Ashley was not without reason attached to his illustrious guest, by whose advice he submitted to the operation—the opening of an abscess in the breast—which saved his life; after which he omitted no occasion of consulting him, even in the closest and most intimate concerns of his family. And in 1672, when, after filling the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, he was created Earl of Shaftesbury and declared Lord Chancellor of England, he appointed Locke his Secretary for the Presentation of Benefices; which, with another office in the Council of Trade, the philosopher resigned in the following year, when his friend, abandoning the court party, placed himself at the head of the Opposition. Lord King, whose work, however, contains much fewer original documents than might have been desired, brings forward several letters and other evidences of the intimate friendship that existed between these celebrated individuals. Shaftesbury, it is clear, personally loved the man; this appears from the tone of their

correspondence, where we discover, on all occasions, not merely great freedom and mutual confidence, but an indication that their friendship was far stricter and more intimate than would seem to be implied in their language. "We long to see you here," says the Earl, in 1679, "and hope you have almost ended your travels. Somersetshire, no doubt, will perfect your breeding; after France and Oxford, you could not go to a more proper place. My wife finds you profit much there, for you have recovered your skill in Chedder cheese, and for a demonstration have sent us one of the best we have seen. I thank you for your care about my grandchild, but having wearied myself with consideration every way, I resolve to have him in my house; I long to speak with you about it. For news we have little, only our government here are so truly zealous for the advancement of the Protestant religion, as it is established in the Church of England, that they are sending the Common Prayer-book the second time into Scotland. No doubt but my Lord Lauderdale knows it will agree with their present constitution; but surely he was much mistaken when he administered the Covenant to England; but we shall see how the tripodes and the holy altar will agree. My Lord of Ormond is said to be dying, so that you have Irish and Scotch news; and for English, you make as much at Bristol as in any part

of England. Thus recommending you to the protection of the Bishop of Bath and Wells, (whose strong beer is the only spiritual thing any Somersetshire gentleman knows,) I rest your very affectionate and assured friend."

Locke had from the beginning been afflicted with ill health; but in 1675 his asthma grew so troublesome, that it was judged necessary he should remove to a warmer and less changeable climate. He therefore crossed over into France; and on the way to Montpellier, which had been fixed on for his residence, kept a journal, in which he very minutely described whatever he considered worthy of notice. Some portions of this journal, after it had lain upwards of a century and a half in obscurity, Lord King has communicated to the public; and notwithstanding, nay, perhaps, in consequence of the extraordinary changes which have taken place in France, the interest of these specimens is so great that few, we believe, can fail to regret the not being put in possession of the whole.

From several parts of this journal it is abundantly apparent, that in all his travels nothing so deeply interested Locke as what concerned religion generally. Into the condition of the Protestants in France, exposed to the oppression of a persecuting government, and the wanton insults of an ignorant and bigoted populace, he also inquired

with persevering sympathy, and has recorded many curious facts, which ought not to be overlooked in a history of the church. It must at the same time be confessed, that even the Huguenots themselves were not wholly free from the persecuting spirit; for not long before Locke's arrival, an Arian was apprehended, seemingly at their instigation; and had he not, upon his trial at Toulouse, denied the truth of the accusation, and made profession of orthodoxy, would have been burnt alive.

The early opening of spring in the south, where he experienced considerable warmth even in January, seems to have afforded our philosopher very particular pleasure. Picturesque descriptions of external nature were not at that time in fashion; but his concise allusion to the beautiful orange-groves of Hyeres forcibly reminds us of the far more luxuriant paradises of Rosetta and the Land of Goshen, where the banana, the citron, the lime, and the orange, intermingle in charming confusion with the graceful palm and the majestic sycamore. "Below the town," says he, "the side of the hill is covered with orange-gardens; ripe China oranges in incredible plenty, sometimes nine or ten in a bunch. These gardens form the most delightful wood I had ever seen; there are little rivulets conveyed through it to water the trees in summer, without which there would be but little fruit."

Having remained fourteen months in the south of France, Locke proceeded, in March, 1677, to visit Paris, where he was treated with much distinction by the learned and the great. Here he continued until the July of the following year, when he again returned to the south; but, after a brief stay, finally quitted it for England; having been recalled, it is supposed, by his friend Shaftesbury, then at the head of the administration. However this may be, he arrived in London on the 8th of May, 1679, and for some time resided in Thanet-House, Aldersgate Street.

But that troublesome complaint which, in 1675, had been the cause of his leaving England, soon compelled him to quit London, and the ensuing winter was spent partly at Oxford, and partly in Somersetshire. Locke now entered deeply into the politics of the times, and being invariably ranged on the popular side, became exceedingly obnoxious to the court. Liberty, however, was unprosperous; and Argyle, Russell, and Sydney fell victims to their exertions in its cause; but Shaftesbury, after a very narrow escape, towards the close of 1682, took refuge in Holland, where shortly after his arrival he died. His body was conveyed back to England, and interred at St. Giles's in Dorsetshire, "where Locke attended the funeral of his patron and friend." In the August following, conceiving that he was no longer safe

in Great Britain, he also went into voluntary exile in Holland.

By an illegal order of the king, and the servility of the dean and chapter,—for the university itself seems to stand acquitted,—Locke was in 1684 deprived of his studentship at Christ-church. But this wretched display of authority could by no means appease the resentment of his majesty. Shelton, the English envoy at the Hague, was instructed to demand that Locke, with several other refugees, who were described as traitors and miscreants, should be given up to the royal vengeance; so that the author of the Essay on the Human Understanding was by day compelled to conceal himself like a brigand, and only venture forth for air and exercise under the cover of darkness. During this period he was engaged in writing his Letter on Toleration, a subject which had for many years occupied his thoughts.

In the meantime William Penn, and the Earl of Pembroke—the same to whom the Essay on the Human Understanding was afterwards dedicated—exerted their influence to soften the rancour of James II., against the friend of Shaftesbury; but Locke was much too prudent to rely on the seeming forgiveness of a Stuart, and remained in Holland until the Revolution of 1688 rendered his return safe. He arrived in England in the same fleet that brought over the Princess of Orange; and was

shortly after, by Lord Mordaunt, whom he had known in Holland, (now one of William's ministers,) offered to be employed as envoy to one of the great German courts; but refused the appointment, assigning as a reason the weakness of his health, which would not, he said, permit him to drink to excess—a qualification he considered indispensable in an ambassador who would obtain any influence in Germany.

He now published his Essay on the Human Understanding, which during eighteen years had formed his principal occupation: the dedication to the Earl of Pembroke is dated May the 24th, 1689; but a short Abridgement of the work, in French, had appeared in the preceding year. Buhle, therefore, who, in his History of Modern Philosophy, states that the first edition of the Essay was published in 1694, is altogether incorrect; the whole of the first impression having been sold, and a second issued as early as 1693.

As the philosophical spirit exerted, at that period, an active and extensive influence in Europe, it is by no means remarkable that the Essay should have excited much attention. The philosophy it contained was bold and novel, and tended to subvert, in a great measure, the fashionable hypotheses; consequently the alarm was sounded on all sides, and the better to refute his positions, it was attempted to be shown that the most fearful

consequences inevitably flow from the principles he sought to establish. The more charitable were willing to suppose him ignorant of the direct tendencies of his own doctrines; others imagined themselves to have discovered in the whole scope and design of his work, an attempt to advance the cause of irreligion by imperceptibly sapping the foundations of Christianity, and spreading the mists of scepticism over the fountains of all our knowledge. Even among his intimate friends there were those who felt shocked at his denying the existence of innate[1] ideas. Shaftesbury, author of

[1] By using the term *innate* in an improper sense, Hume is led to consider our "impressions" innate, and our ideas not so. He bestows the term impression upon "our more lively perceptions: when we hear, or see, or feel, or love, or hate, or desire, or will;" and then he tells us these impressions are innate—that is, were born with us, and were, consequently, in our minds before we had heard, or seen, or felt, or loved, or hated, or desired, or willed. I must confess I can perceive, in his speculations on the origin of our ideas, none of that subtilty and acuteness for which he has obtained credit; nor can I think him justified in accusing Locke of making use, like the schoolmen, of undefined terms, and drawing out his disputes to a tedious length, *without ever touching the point in question.* I admit he is sometimes tedious, —and who is not?—but cannot discover that he is so without ever touching the point in question. On the contrary, it is by touching it too frequently, by viewing it again and again, in various lights, that he seems to become tedious; and every conscientious seeker after truth, by his eagerness to carry conviction into the mind of the reader, is liable to lay himself open to this charge.

the "Characteristics," in England, and Leibnitz, on the Continent, attacked the new philosophy, endeavouring, in different ways, to show its principles to be dangerous or untenable. Stillingfleet, the celebrated Bishop of Worcester, likewise ranged himself among the opponents of Locke, and his death is said to have been hastened by the signal defeat he sustained in the controversy. The same thing is related of Salmasius, against whom Milton directed that vehement burst of eloquence—the Defence of the People of England. But little credit is due to such traditions; and, as a biographer of the poet judiciously observes, our great defenders of freedom can very well dispense with such testimonies in their favour.

To clear the way for the reception of his system, Locke perceived the necessity of demolishing, from the foundations, the doctrine of innate ideas—those κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι, on which philosophers had, until then, been accustomed to build so much of their hypotheses. The question, besides its natural difficulty and obscurity, had been surrounded by prejudice with a circumvallation of imaginary dangers to religion; and the fears previously, by well-meaning but unphilosophical persons, entertained, were rather aggravated than diminished, when, on reading the Essay, they discovered the startling novelty of his theory of conscience, morals, virtue and happiness. Besides, from over-eagerness to establish

his views, Locke has too easily admitted the existence of whole nations of atheists; for had he, with his usual accuracy, scrutinized the relations of those travellers upon whose testimony he on these points relied, he would have found them filled with mistakes, arising from the grossest ignorance of the people whose indistinct and uncertain opinions on the most abtruse questions of theology they had undertaken to explain.

However, if in developing his system he sometimes inadvertently availed himself of the support of doubtful or imaginary facts, nothing can be more certain than that he completely succeeded in overthrowing the hypotheses which he combated. Leibnitz, indeed, whose whole life was spent in patching up and contending for extravagant and exploded systems, undertook, as has already been said, the defence of innate ideas; but this did not hinder mankind from perceiving the truths advanced by Locke, though fears were still entertained that many evils of unknown magnitude might thence ensue. Many seemed, in fact, to apprehend that he meditated nothing less than the total subversion of virtue and religion; for ignorance had long identified with the cause of the altar the errors which he laboured to remove. To obviate, therefore, the prejudices that might arise from this supposition, he was careful to manifest, at every step of the inquiry, his unfeigned, deep-

rooted reverence for the things of God; and this feeling, in him, was so habitual, so much a part of the character and constitution of his mind, so indissolubly linked with his earliest and most cherished associations, that he would have found it far more difficult to conceal than to display it. Accordingly, it may with the strictest veracity be said that no philosopher, not even Plato himself, who placed all true happiness in the knowledge of God, was ever more intimately convinced of the truths of religion, or more thoroughly imbued with its divine spirit, than the Author of the Essay on the Human Understanding.

But, had it been otherwise, had he marshalled all the powers of his splendid intellect against Christianity, what other destiny could have awaited him than that which has overtaken so many others? How unworthy, and weak, and vain, are the fears which good men sometimes entertain for their religion! Certain exceptions, indeed, appear to forbid the universal application of what follows; but, upon the whole, it is most true that the religious feeling is as much a part of human nature as reason or imagination. Religion began with the beginning of man in Eden; it has survived the successive revolutions of many thousand years; it has defied persecution; it has triumphed over despotism; it has, in all ages, been the companion of those master-minds, which for their loftiness, and

purity, and holiness, may perhaps without impiety be said, during their earthly pilgrimage, to have walked with God. It has likewise humbled itself and become the inmate of the meanest cottage, and cheered the labourer in his labour, the poor man in his poverty, the sick upon his bed; it has been the friend and the support of the widow and the fatherless, and those who had none to help them; it has wiped away the tears from the eyes of affliction; it has comforted the despairing; it has seated itself where all other succour would be vain, beside the couch of the dying, and smoothed their pillow and mitigated their pangs, and poured the oil of gladness into their souls, and become their counsellor and advocate and surety with God. And shall we fear for religion? Shall we entertain apprehensions for that which can never cease but with the total extinction of all finite, or at least of all rational and intelligent creatures, which must leave the Deity alone in the immeasurable universe?

But not only was Locke under the influence of the religious spirit,—he embraced precisely that modification of it which constitutes Christianity; and everywhere, in the midst of the profoundest speculations, suffers to appear manifest indications that he possessed his soul in pious humility, and above all knowledge prized that which has been through Jesus Christ revealed to mankind. Indeed, the Essay on the Human Understanding may be

regarded as a religious book. Throughout, together with an ardent love of truth, we find the most earnest inculcation of contentment and holiness of life. Our faculties, feeble and limited as he shows them to be, are always represented sufficiently powerful to discover the track of duty which he believes us able and free to follow; and no one, perhaps, ever perused attentively the chapter on infinity without being smitten with involuntary awe; without intimately experiencing the truth uttered by the apostle, that in God we live, and move, and have our being; without feeling himself borne beyond the utmost limits of the universe, into those immeasurable realms of space, where the Spirit of God still appears to brood o'er the vast abyss and make it pregnant. Passing from this sublime subject to the consideration of power, of which the human mind seems incapable of conceiving any other than a very dim and obscure idea, he demonstrates that our notion of spirit is certainly not less if it be not more clear than our notion of body; and in a brief passage, not perhaps wholly free from inconsistency, drops the first hint of Berkeley's theory, according to which nothing exists for us but as it is perceived.

Nevertheless, not being able to deny that irrational animals think; and being unwilling to suppose in them a spiritual soul, or impiously to conceive a limit to the power of God, he expresses his

belief that the Almighty might confer on matter the faculty of thinking. Hence the cry of irreligion which was raised against him in his own times, and has, among certain persons, been kept up to the present day. But, in pretending to decide what God can or cannot do, we make very free, as Butler observes, with the Deity; and, perhaps, in pushing our inquiries into these awful questions, are not altogether free from impiety: very little reflection would, at least, serve to show that, in all such conjectures, we are endeavouring to pass the bounds which the Almighty has prescribed to our understanding, and must therefore for ever be baffled in the vain attempt.

It is very different when we reason on the matter of fact. Setting aside, for the present, that portion of the inquiry which relates to the inferior animals, it seems capable of demonstration that the human soul is a monad, indiscerptible, and, as far as our experience extends, unchangeable. All philosophers, we believe, agree that the material particles or atoms which compose our bodies are in a state of perpetual change, something new being constantly added, while, what previously formed a portion of our system, detaches itself and passes away in insensible perspiration; so that in seven years, according to some calculations, the matter of which our bodies consist is wholly renewed. In this mutation the brain, of course, participates;

consequently, in the man of to-day there remains not one particle of the matter of which his body, seven years ago, consisted. In this respect he is as different from his former self as from Eteocles or Polynices. Yet, though all the matter in his organized system be changed, there is something in the man which remains unchanged; something that links him with his youth, with his boyhood, with his infancy, in which memory and consciousness inhere, which survives the repeated vicissitudes of his frame, and properly constitutes himself. This something cannot be matter, for it has already been shown that, under this supposition, there could be no identity, and consciousness would be impossible. For, allowing, for the sake of argument, that it is the brain which receives from without ideas of sensation, and within forms those of reflection by contemplating its own operations; the impressions made on it could last no longer than itself: but it is admitted that the material particles composing the brain are in a state of constant flux, and come, in the course of years, to be wholly changed; the material particles which depart would, therefore, were they the depositaries of our ideas, carry away with them all the impressions they had, while in the brain, received; it would in fact be palpably impossible these should remain when the substances on which they had been impressed were detached: but we find that ideas are

not thus fleeting; that they continue to exist in the mind forty, fifty, nay, in some men, a hundred years: the substance in which our ideas are deposited remains, consequently, the same from youth to age; but the matter of our bodies is perpetually changing; therefore the human soul is not material.

Another view of the question may equally serve to convince us of this truth. If the soul were material, it must, like all other material substances, consist of extended solid parts, and might be divided *ad infinitum*. Suppose, however, it consisted only of five parts, corresponding with the number of the senses; each part would receive its peculiar ideas; but being separated from its neighbour by the infinite gulf which divides plurality from unity and diversity from identity, it could never communicate what it had received, unless we erect each portion of the soul into a distinct intelligence, endued with separate consciousness, and means of imparting thought; which, in reality, would be to imagine so many souls, and to destroy the oneness and individuality of man. For, how could part A obtain cognizance of what part B experienced? There would be an absolute necessity to suppose another intelligence, apart from this cluster of material souls, and essentially one and indivisible, in which might centre, as in a point, the converging rays of intellectual light; or, to speak without a

figure, the several trains of ideas transmitted inward by the senses.

Interpose, therefore, as many material apparatus as we please between the external world and the substance that thinks within us, it is but imagining a circle within a circle; we must at last come to a monad, or unity, unextended and indivisible. That which has distinct separate parts can never think. There will always be an absolute necessity, not only for a *vinculum*, or connecting principle, distinct from the parts themselves,—and what it is that binds together the particles of matter has never been explained,—but likewise for something essentially one, which may take cognizance of the movements and operations of the material organs by which it externally manifests its energies, and through which it receives ideas of what exists beyond the circle of its own consciousness. Had this view of the question presented itself to Locke, it is probable he would have discovered its perfect consistency with the phenomena of thought; and have thence inferred that, unless it should please God to confer on matter other qualities than it now possesses, that is, to change its nature, it must for ever remain incapable of thinking.

In tracing the connexion of the Essay on the Human Understanding with religion,—which our limits enable us very imperfectly to accomplish,—it would be unpardonable to overlook its rigorous

demonstration of the existence of a God. It is indeed humiliating to our reason that there should be individuals whose opinions render such a demonstration necessary. But this is the case,—indeed many ingenious men have amused the world with doubts of their own existence;—and since it is so, we must endeavour to show that nature supplies us with lights the possession of which renders doubt on this subject wholly inexcusable.

It is often objected by the lovers of novelty that the proofs and arguments made use of in this demonstration are hackneyed; and so they are. And if a man should now go about to show that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones; or that ten and three and seven are equal to twenty, what could he say that would not be hackneyed? Truth, and our mode of approaching it through syllogisms, and the circumstances of nature, and the make and powers of one mind, remaining nearly the same, how can we,—if truth be our object, and, we would not, for novelty's sake, embrace error,—do otherwise than repeat, in our own manner indeed, the arguments which have heretofore been employed by others for the same purpose? Hippias of Eleia, a man celebrated in antiquity for his aversion to old truths, once made himself merry with Socrates upon the monotony of his opinions; and in return was complimented by the philosopher on the wonderful versatility which

enabled him constantly to shift the bases of his thoughts, and to decide, on the self-same question, now one way, and now another.[1]

Locke in this resembled Socrates, that he felt no aversion to embrace truths because they had been previously embraced by others. He was not desirous of startling, but of instructing mankind. And being persuaded that real knowledge is conducive to real happiness, he dissembled no truths which he appeared to have discovered, and scorned, on all occasions, to dress up popular errors in the guise of eternal verities, either for the purpose of eluding persecution, or acquiring for himself the advantages of power. We may be sure, therefore, that he was most earnest in the pursuit, and most honest in the disclosure of what he conceived to be truth; and, accordingly that, in his demonstrations of the existence of a God, we behold, not the arguments of a cold, subtile metaphysician linked together for display, but the reasoning of a man whose warm conviction gives weight to every

[1] It has been well observed by an eminent Christian philosopher of our times, that "in philosophy equally as in poetry, genius produces the strongest impressions of novelty, while it rescues the stalest and most admitted truths from the impotence caused by the very circumstance of their universal admission. Truths, of all others the most awful and mysterious, yet being at the same time of universal interest, are too often considered as so true that they lose all the powers of truth, and lie bed-ridden in the dormitory of the soul, side by side with the most despised and exploded errors."—*Friend*, vol. i.

proof, and infuses through the whole composition a vigour and vitality not to be found in the unsatisfactory ratiocinations of a sophist.

Did the space requisite for the due consideration of other topics permit, we would willingly have introduced in this place the whole of the incomparably splendid chapter to which we have been alluding. But all we have room for is an extract, which may, however, induce the reader, if he should happen not to be already acquainted with it, to have recourse to the Essay itself. Having observed that, though the evidence of the existence of a God be equal to mathematical certainty, it yet requires thought and attention, and that the mind should apply itself to a regular deduction of it from some part of our intuitive knowledge, he proceeds: "I think it is beyond question that man has a clear idea of his own being; he knows certainly he exists, and that he is something. He that can doubt whether he be any thing or not, I speak not to, no more than I could argue with, pure nothing, or endeavour to convince non-entity that it were something. If any one pretends to be so sceptical, as to deny his own existence, (for really to doubt of it is manifestly impossible,) let him for me enjoy his beloved happiness of being nothing, until hunger, or some other pain, convince him of the contrary. This then, I think, I may take for a truth, which every one's certain

knowledge assures him of, beyond the liberty of doubting, *viz.* that he is something that actually exists.

"In the next place, man knows by an intuitive certainty, that bare nothing can no more produce any real being, than it can be equal to two right angles. If a man knows not that non-entity, or the absence of all being, cannot be equal to two right angles, it is impossible he should know any demonstration in Euclid. If, therefore, we know there is some real being and that non-entity cannot produce any real being, it is an evident demonstration, that from eternity there has been something; since what was not from eternity had beginning; and what had a beginning must be produced by something else.

"Next it is evident, that what had its being and beginning from another, must also have all that which is in, and belongs to its being from another too. All the powers it has must be owing to, and received from, the same source. This eternal source then of all being must also be the source and original of all power; and so this eternal being must be also the most powerful.

"Again, a man finds in himself perception and knowledge. We have then got one step farther, and we are certain now, that there is not only some being, but some knowing intelligent being in the world. There was a time then, when there was no

knowing being, and when knowledge began to be; or else there has been also a knowing being from eternity. If it be said, there was a time when no being had any knowledge, when that eternal being was void of all understanding; I reply, that then it was impossible there should ever have been any knowledge: it being as impossible that things wholly void of knowledge, and operating blindly, and without any perception, should produce a knowing being, as it is impossible that a triangle should make itself three angles bigger than two right ones. For it is as repugnant to the idea of senseless matter, that it should put into itself sense, perception, and knowledge, as it is repugnant to the idea of a triangle, that it should put into itself greater angles than two right ones.

"Thus from the consideration of ourselves, and what we infallibly find in our own constitutions, our reason leads us to the knowledge of this certain and evident truth, that there is an eternal, most powerful, and most knowing being; which whether any one will please to call God, it matters not. The thing is evident, and from this idea duly considered, will easily be deduced all those other attributes, which we ought to ascribe to this eternal being. If, nevertheless, any one should be found so senselessly arrogant as to suppose man alone knowing and wise, but yet the product of mere ignorance and chance; and that all the rest of the

universe acted only by that blind haphazard, I shall leave with him that very rational and emphatical rebuke of Tully, to be considered at his leisure: 'What can be more sillily arrogant and misbecoming, than for a man to think that he has a mind and understanding in him, but yet in all the universe beside there is no such thing? or that those things, which with the utmost stretch of his reason he can scarce comprehend should be moved and managed without any reason at all.'"[1]

"From what has been said, it is plain to me, we have a more certain knowledge of the existence of a God, than of any thing our senses have not immediately discovered to us. Nay, I presume I may say, that we more certainly know that there is a God, than that there is any thing else without us. When I say we know, I mean there is such a knowledge within our reach, which we cannot miss, if we will but apply our minds to that, as we do to several other inquiries."

Much has, at different times, been written on the style of the Essay on the Human Understanding. According to Dugald Stewart, it resembles that of a well-educated man of the world, rather than of a

[1] De Legib. lib. ii. Cicero's words are:—"Quid est enim verius, quam neminem esse oportere tam stulte arrogantem, ut in se mentem et rationem putet inesse, in cœlo mundoque non putet? Aut ea quæ vix summa ingenii ratione comprehendat, nulla ratione moveri putet?"

recluse student, "who had made an object of the art of composition;" from which it may be inferred that, with Locke, the art of composition had not formed an object of study. But, whoever shall duly consider his remarks on Particles, in the seventh chapter of the third book, will certainly conclude that no recluse student could ever attach more importance than he did to style. What his opinion was of the language in use among men of the world, he has also taken care, in many places, to express; more particularly in book the third, chapter the eleventh, where, contending for the proper use of words he says, "This exactness is absolutely necessary in inquiries after philosophical knowledge, and in controversies about truth; and though it would be well, too, if it extended itself to common conversation and the ordinary affairs of life, yet I think that is scarce to be expected." Farther on he observes, "that propriety of speech is that which gives our thoughts entrance into other men's minds with the greatest ease and advantage;" and to this he is careful to add, that "the proper signification and use of terms is best to be learned from those, who, in their writings and discourses, appear to have had the clearest notions, and applied their terms with the exactest choice and fitness." From which it seems evident that the art of composition commanded no inconsiderable portion of his attention; so that if, after all, his

style resemble that of a well-educated man of the world, who had never regarded language with a rhetorician's eyes, it must be concluded that the care and pains he bestowed on this part of his studies was utterly thrown away.

Walter Savage Landor, himself a writer remarkable for the vigour and originality of his language, runs, in speaking of Locke, into the opposite extreme, giving his style the preference in comparison with that of Plato. But this decision is still more paradoxical than Dugald Stewart's. Of all prose authors, Plato is perhaps the one who has most excelled in the management of language, which he has invested with every beauty, of which it appears to be susceptible in unmetrical composition; his style successively adapting itself with equal facility to the highest flights of the imagination, the most abstruse inquiries in metaphysics, and the liveliest and homeliest sallies of familiar badinage. If we can conceive Shakespeare's language applied to philosophical investigations in all its poetical fervour, power, and flexibility, but divested of its quaintness, it might give us some idea, though still but a faint one, of the splendour and inexhaustible variety of Plato, which to those who can be delighted with intellectual beauty, render the study of his writings a passion and a luxury. To pretend to discover all these excellencies in the style of Locke would be absurd affectation. It has

however great beauties; and of these not the least is that admirable perspicuity,—in Aristotle's opinion the chiefest excellency of language,—which almost always enables us rapidly to seize his meaning, even in those passages where the nature of the subject might have appeared to excuse some degree of obscurity. There is besides in most of his compositions, a masculine strength, an earnestness, a warmth,—distinct from the warmth of passion,—arising evidently from the force of his convictions, from the intimate persuasion that what he advances is based on truth; and the combination of these qualities, united with the grandeur and importance of the ideas, rises, in many parts of the Essay, into a noble eloquence, still more strikingly perceptible in the "Conduct of the Understanding," and the vehement refutations of error in the "Treatise on Government." At the same time it must not be dissembled that the construction of his sentences is often destitute of all grace; and that the prejudice against figurative language, which at one time possessed him, led too frequently to the employment of a bald unvivified form of expression, wholly incommensurate to the magnitude of his ideas. From this charge Lord Bacon himself,—next to Milton the most figurature prose writer in our language,—is not wholly free, as any one who reads the History of Henry VII. and several of his other works, will perceive. But the defect is more ap-

parent in Locke, who, from a false theory, studiously, during many years, laboured to deprive his works of the advantage and charm derived from the judicious use of tropes and figures.

To proceed, however, with our outline of his life. "The occupations which now engaged the attention of this great man," says Lord King, "were of the most varied and opposite description. He was at the same time a practical politician, and a profound speculative philosopher; a man of the world, engaged in the business of the world, yet combining with all those avocations the purity and simplicity of a primitive Christian. He pursued every subject with incredible activity and diligence; always regulating his numerous inquiries by the love of truth, and directing them to the improvement and benefit of his country and of mankind."

He now, in defence of the rights of the people, published his work on Government; and in the following year, 1690, a Second Letter on Toleration, in which he further developed the principles of religious liberty. About this time, it is supposed, he became acquained with Newton, Sir John Somers, and the celebrated Earl of Peterborough, with whom, when either happened to be absent from London, he kept up a regular correspondence. With Newton also he occasionally corresponded; and there have been preserved and

published several letters of this great man, partly relating to his "Account of the Corruptions of Scripture," which prove at once the irritability, goodness of heart, ingenuousness, and constitutional timidity of that *Lux altera gentis.*

In 1691 Locke published his "Considerations on the Lowering of Interest," to which, in 1695, further considerations, forming a second part, were added. His object, in this work, was to demonstrate the injustice of raising the denomination and lowering the standard of the currency; and in the great recoinage of 1695 his advice was followed, and the current money of the realm restored to the full legal standard. He at the same time anticipated the conclusion, if not the arguments, of Bentham, in his "Defence of Usury;" showing that all attempts at regulating the rate of interest increase the difficulty of borrowing, while they prejudice none but those who need assistance. He was in this year, rather as a compliment than as a reward for his labours, nominated a member of the Council of Trade; an honour which, on account of his increasing infirmities, he during the following year resigned.

Though the feebleness of his constitution was incompatible with that continued residence in London, which the duties of a public office might have required, it seems by no means to have interfered with his literary labours; for in 1695 ap-

peared his "Reasonableness of Christianity;" and in the following year, his First and Second Vindications of this work, together with his then celebrated Letters to Stillingfleet, in defence of the Essay on the Human Understanding. Locke now resided with Sir F. and Lady Masham, at Oates, near Ongar, in Essex; where he enjoyed, what he appears always to have highly valued, the society of an intellectual and fascinating woman. Lady Masham was the daughter of Cudworth, author of the "Eternal Principles of Morality;" and there had subsisted for many years an intimacy between the philosopher and this amiable family, as appears from a letter addressed, in 1683, to her Ladyship's brother in Hindoostan. Locke's fondness for Voyages and Travels is well known. He in fact preferred them to almost every other kind of books; and, in this letter, we find him inquiring curiously about the tricks of the Indian jugglers, "which," says he, "must needs be beyond legerdemain;" the notions of the Brahmins, concerning spirits and apparitions; and their religious opinions and ceremonies, of which he had obtained a tolerably correct idea from Bernier, with whom he was personally acquainted. He also desired to learn whether any copies of the Old or New Testament, in any language, existed among the oriental nations, previous to their communications with Europeans, consequent upon the

discovery of the passage by the Cape of Good Hope.

In this agreeable retirement he spent the last four years of his life, engaged in the study of St. Paul's Epistles, on which he composed a commentary, published among his posthumous works. Though struggling with an incurable disease, his temper continued calm and unruffled. His interest in the welfare of his friends was unabated. Cheerful, but resigned to his fate, he saw death approach without perturbation: he had lived like a Christian, and hoped to meet, in another world, with a Christian's reward. In the month of October, 1704, it became evident that his dissolution was at hand; and on the 27th, Lady Masham, not meeting with him in his study, went to his bedside, where she found him worn down and exhausted, and never expecting to rise again. He told her his earthly career was now terminated, and that in comparatively few hours he should be no more. To those present he wished all felicity; and to Lady Masham, who lingered in his chamber longer than the rest, he expressed his gratitude to God for the great happiness he had tasted in his life; but added that he now found all here below was vanity; exhorting her to consider this world only as a state of preparation for a better. He overruled her desire to sit up with him, observing, that he might perhaps be able to sleep, and

would send for her, if any change should happen. Continuing awake all night, however, he in the morning was removed into his study, where he enjoyed a short sleep in his chair. He then desired to be dressed, and Lady Masham again coming to him he heard her, with great attention, read a portion of the Psalms; but feeling the near approach of death, stopped her, and a few minutes afterwards breathed his last, about three o'clock of the 28th of October, aged seventy-two years and two months.

Le Clerc, who, in the French manner, composed the eloge of Locke, concludes it with the character of the philosopher, derived from a person who knew him well, probably Lady Masham herself. This, with Lord King, we adopt as a judicious and excellent portraiture of the man:—"He was," says she, (and I can confirm her testimony in great measure, by what I have myself seen here,) "a profound philosopher, and a man fit for the most important affairs. He had much knowledge of belles lettres, and his manners were very polite and particularly engaging. He knew something of almost every thing which can be useful to mankind, and was thoroughly master of all that he had studied; but he showed his superiority by not appearing to value himself in any way on account of his great attainments. Nobody assumed less the airs of a master, or was less dogmatical; and he

was never offended when any one did not agree with his opinion. There are, nevertheless, a species of disputants who, after having been refuted several times, always return to the charge, and only repeat the same argument. These he could not endure, and he sometimes talked of them with impatience; but he was the first to acknowledge that he had been too hasty. In the most trifling circumstances of life, as well as in speculative opinions, he was always ready to be convinced by reason, let the information come from whomsoever it might. He was the most faithful follower, or indeed the slave of truth, which he never abandoned on any account, and which he loved for its own sake.

"He accommodated himself to the level of the most moderate understandings; and in disputing with them, he did not diminish the force of their arguments against himself, although they were not well expressed by those who had used them. He felt pleasure in conversing with all sorts of people, and tried to profit by their information; which arose not only from the good education he had received, but from the opinion he entertained, that there was nobody from whom something useful could not be got. And indeed by this means he had learned so many things, concerning the arts and trade, that he seemed to have made them his particular study; insomuch that those whose pro-

fession they were, often profited by his information, and consulted him with advantage. Bad manners particularly annoyed and disgusted him, when he saw they proceeded not from ignorance of the world, but from pride, from haughtiness, from ill-nature, from brutal stupidity, and other similar vices; otherwise, he was far from despising whomever it might be for having a disagreeable appearance. He considered civility not only as something agreeable and proper to gain people's hearts, but as a duty of Christianity, which ought to be more insisted on than it commonly is. He recommended, with reference to this, a tract of Messrs. de Port Royal, "Sur les Moyens de conserver la Paix avec les Hommes;" and he much approved the sermons he had heard from Mr. Whichcote, a doctor of divinity, on this subject, and which have since been printed.

"His conversation was very agreeable to all sorts of people, and even to ladies; and nobody was better received than he was among people of the highest rank. He was by no means austere; and as the conversation of well-bred people is usually more easy, and less studied and formal, if Mr. Locke had not naturally these talents, he had acquired them by intercourse with the world: and what made him so much the more agreeable was, that those who were not acquainted with him, did not expect to find such manners in a man so much

devoted to study. Those who courted the acquaintance of Mr. Locke, to collect what might be learnt from a man of his understanding, and who approached him with respect, were surprised to find in him not only the manners of a well-bred man, but also all the attention which they could expect. He often spoke against raillery, which is the most hazardous part of conversation if not managed with address; and though he excelled in it himself, he never said any thing which could shock or injure any body. He knew how to soften every thing he said, and to give it an agreeable turn. If he joked his friends, it was about a trifling fault, or about something which it was advantageous for them to know. As he was particularly civil, even when he began to joke, people were satisfied that he would end by saying something obliging. He never ridiculed a misfortune or any natural defect.

"He was very charitable to the poor, provided they were not the idle or the profligate, who did not frequent any church, or who spent their Sundays in an ale-house. He felt, above all, compassion for those who, after having worked hard in their youth, sunk into poverty in their old age. He said, that it was not sufficient to keep them from starving, but that they ought to be enabled to live with some comfort. He sought opportunities of doing good to deserving objects; and often in his walks he visited the poor of the neighbourhood, and gave them

wherewithal to relieve their wants, or to buy the medicines he prescribed for them if they were sick, and had no medical aid.

"He did not like any thing to be wasted: which was, in his opinion, losing the treasure of which God had made us the economists. He himself was very regular, and kept exact accounts of every thing.

"If he had any defect, it was the being somewhat passionate; but he had got the better of it by reason, and it was very seldom that it did him or any one else any harm. He often described the ridicule of it; and said that it availed nothing in the education of children, nor in keeping servants in order, and that it only lessened the authority which one had over them. He was kind to his servants, and showed them, with gentleness, how he wished to be served. He not only kept strictly a secret which had been confided to him, but he never mentioned any thing which could prove injurious, although he had not been enjoined secrecy; nor could he ever wrong a friend by any sort of indiscretion or inadvertency. He was an exact observer of his word, and what he promised was sacred. He was scrupulous about recommending people whom he did not know, and he could not bring himself to praise those whom he did not think worthy. If he was told that his recommendations had not produced the effect which was ex-

pected, he said, that it arose from his never having deceived any body by saying more than he knew, that what he answered for might be found as he stated it; and that, if he acted otherwise, his recommendations would have no weight.

"His greatest amusement was to talk with sensible people, and he courted their conversation. He possessed all the requisite qualities for keeping up an agreeable and friendly intercourse. He only played at cards to please others, although from having often found himself among people who did, he played well enough when he set about it; but he never proposed it, and said it was only an amusement for those who had no conversation.

"In his habits he was clean, without affectation or singularity: he was naturally very active, and occupied himself as much as his health would admit of. Sometimes he took pleasure in working in a garden, which he understood perfectly. He liked exercise, but the complaint on his chest not allowing him to walk much, he used to ride after dinner: when he could no longer bear the motion of a horse, he used to go out in a wheel-chair; and he always wished for a companion, even if it were only a child, for he felt pleasure in talking with well-bred children. The weak state of his health was an inconvenience to himself alone, and occasioned no unpleasant sensation to any one, beyond that of seeing him suffer. His diet was the same as

other people's, except that he usually drank nothing but water; and he thought his abstinence in this respect had preserved his life so long, although his constitution was so weak. He attributed to the same cause the preservation of his sight, which was not much impaired at the end of his life; for he could read by candle-light all sorts of books, unless the print was very small, and he never made use of spectacles. He had no other infirmity but his asthma, except that four years before his death he became very deaf, during a period of about six months. Finding himself thus deprived of the pleasure of conversation, he doubted whether blindness was not preferable to deafness, as he wrote to one of his friends; otherwise he bore his infirmities very patiently." "This," as Le Clerc says, "is an accurate, and by no means a flattered description of this great man."

The views which Locke, after a patient and laborious examination of the Scriptures, was led to take of some of the leading doctrines of Christianity, appear to have been substantially the same as those of Milton and Sir Isaac Newton. Truth was, on all occasions, the object of his researches: he valued it above all things; and the diligence of his inquiries was proportioned to the importance of their aim. But, that he should always have attained to the knowledge of truth, who shall affirm? particularly on those awful subjects where the

vast interests every man has at stake render it incumbent on him to trust the decisions of no judgment but his own; which, considering the natural inequalities discoverable in human intellect, and the wonderful diversities of human character, must necessarily give rise to error; though doubtless the sincere seeker will always find so much of truth as may be necessary to his eternal salvation. "A holy life," says Jeremy Taylor, "will make our belief holy, if we consult not humanity and its imperfections in the choice of our religion, but search for truth without designs, save only of acquiring heaven, and then be as careful to preserve charity, as we are to get a point of faith. I am much persuaded we should find out more truths by this means; or however (which is the main of all) we shall be secured though we miss them; and then we are well enough."[1]

This was the course pursued by Locke in composing the Reasonableness of Christianity. He had discovered the inconsistencies and unsatisfactoriness of the ordinary systems of divinity; and not to consult "humanity and its imperfections" in the choice of his religion, he betook himself to the diligent study of the Scriptures, which he found to contain doctrines clear and intelligible, and adapted to the apprehension of the bulk of

[1] Liberty of Prophesying, p. 5.

mankind. From the title and general tone of the work, we should have inferred that it was chiefly addressed to those professors of Christianity who overlook its precepts to dwell upon its mysteries, and seem desirous of setting faith and reason in opposition to each other; who think they can never have enough to believe, though far too much to practice; who, confident in their imagined strength, rush in "where angel's fear to tread;" enter dogmatically into the secret designs and purposes of God; rashly seek to lift the veil from those things which 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive;' and, not even yet content, set themselves up as infallible in their way, and require all men to adopt their opinions, and hazard their salvation on the soundness of their judgments. This is what, from a perusal of the work, we should have supposed. But, in the preface to the Second Vindication, Locke himself gives us the history of the book, and an explanation of his views in composing it. Addressing himself to the Rev. Mr. Bold, who, without being personally acquainted with him, had undertaken his defence, he says:—"Since you seem to me to comprehend what I have laid together, with the same disposition of mind, and in the same sense that I received it from the holy Scriptures, I shall, as a mark of my respect to you, give you a particular account of the occasion of it.

"The beginning of the year in which it was published, the controversy that made so much noise and heat amongst some of the Dissenters, coming one day accidentally into my mind, drew me, by degrees, into a stricter and more thorough inquiry into the question about justification. The Scripture was direct and plain; and it was faith that justified: the next question then was, What faith that was that justified; what it was which, if a man believed, it should be imputed to him for righteousness? To find out this, I thought the right way was, to search the Scriptures; and thereupon betook myself seriously to the reading of the New Testament, only to that purpose. What that produced, you and the world have seen.

"The first view I had of it seemed mightily to satisfy my mind, in the reasonableness and plainness of this doctrine; but yet the general silence I had in my little reading met with, concerning any such thing, awed me with apprehension of singularity, till going on in the Gospel history, the whole tenour of it made it so clear and visible, that I more wondered that every body did not see and embrace it, than that I should assent to what was so plainly laid down, and so frequently inculcated in Holy Writ, though systems of divinity said nothing of it. That which added to my satisfaction was, that it led me into a discovery of the

marvellous and divine wisdom of our Saviour's conduct, in all the circumstances of his promulgating this doctrine; as well as of the necessity that such a lawgiver should be sent from God for the reforming the morality of the world; two points that, I must confess, I had not found so fully and advantageously explained in the books of divinity I had met with, as the history of the Gospel seemed to me, upon an attentive perusal, to give occasion and matter for. But the necessity and wisdom of our Saviour's opening the doctrine (which he came to publish) as he did, in parables and figurative ways of speaking, carries such a thread of evidence through the whole history of the Evangelists, as I think is impossible to be resisted; and makes it a demonstration, that the sacred historians did not write by concert, as advocates for a bad cause, or to give colour and credit to an imposture, they would usher into the world; since they, every one of them, in some place or other, omit some passages of our Saviour's life, or circumstances of his actions, which show the wisdom and wariness of his conduct; and which even those of the Evangelists who have recorded, do barely and transiently mention, without laying any stress on them, or making the least remark of what consequence they are, to give us our Saviour's true character, and to prove the truth of their history.

These are evidences of truth and sincerity, which result alone from the nature of things, and cannot be produced by any art or contrivance.

"How much I was pleased with the growing discovery, every day, whilst I was employed in this search, I need not say. The wonderful harmony, that the farther I went disclosed itself, tending to the same points, in all the parts of the sacred history of the Gospel, was of no small weight with me and another person, who, every day, from the beginning to the end of my search, saw the progress of it, and knew at my first setting out that I was ignorant whither it would lead me; and therefore, every day, asked me, what more the Scripture had taught me? So far was I from the thoughts of Socinianism, or an intention to write for that or any other party, or to publish any thing at all. But when I had gone through the whole, and saw what a plain, simple, reasonable thing Christianity was, suited to all conditions and capacities; and in the morality of it now, with divine authority, established into a legible law, so far surpassing all that philosophy and human reason had attained to, or could possibly make effectual to all degrees of mankind, I was flattered to think it might be of some use in the world; especially to those who thought either that there was no need of revelation at all, or that the revelation of our Saviour required the belief of such articles for salvation,

which the settled notions and their way of reasoning in some, and want of understanding in others, made impossible to them. Upon these two topics the objections seemed to turn, which were with most assurance made by Deists against Christianity; but against Christianity misunderstood. It seemed to me, that there needed no more to show them the weakness of their exceptions, but to lay plainly before them the doctrine of our Saviour and his apostles, as delivered in the Scriptures, and not as taught by the several sects of Christians."

The reader, acquainted with the circumstances of the philosopher's life, aware of the extent of his knowledge, the brilliance of his genius, the singular vigour and keenness of his judgment, his love of truth, and indefatigable diligence in the search of it, may now proceed with confidence to the study of the Reasonableness of Christianity. He will find in the language a plainness and simplicity reflected from the Scriptures themselves. No opinion is advanced but what seems based on some text: no fine-spun inferences are drawn from doubtful expressions. The discourses of Christ and his apostles, as far as possible according to the order of time, are examined, compared, and explained, sometimes from the circumstances under which they were delivered, sometimes from their reference to the general scheme of Christiani-

ty, but always without any attempt at straining their meaning, or any of those disingenuous arts common among the framers of systems. Occasionally, indeed, he appears to mistake the intention of Scripture: but, not being sure of our own interpretation, it would be presumption to decide he must everywhere be wrong where we think him so; though we claim for ourselves the liberty he demanded, to examine his examination, and draw our own conclusions.

J. A. St. J.

London, December, 1835.

THE REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY.

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REASONABLENESS

OF

CHRISTIANITY.

THE little satisfaction and consistency that is to be found in most of the systems of divinity I have met with, made me betake myself to the sole reading of the Scripture (to which they all appeal) for the understanding the Christian religion. What from thence, by an attentive and unbiassed search I have received, reader, I here deliver to thee. If by this my labour thou receivest any light or confirmation in the truth, join with me in thanks to the Father of Lights, for his condescension to our understandings. If, upon a fair and unprejudiced examination, thou findest I have mistaken the sense and tenor of the gospel, I beseech thee, as a true Christian, in the spirit of the gospel (which is that of charity) and in the words of sobriety, set me right in the doctrine of salvation.

1. It is obvious to any one who reads the New Testament, that the doctrine of redemption, and consequently of the gospel, is founded upon the

supposition of Adam's fall. To understand, therefore, what we are restored to by Jesus Christ, we must consider what the Scripture shows we lost by Adam. This I thought worthy of a diligent and unbiassed search; since I found the two extremes that men run into on this point, either on the one hand shook the foundations of all religion, or on the other made Christianity almost nothing. For whilst some men would have all Adam's posterity doomed to eternal infinite punishment, for the transgression of Adam, whom millions had never heard of, and no one had authorized to transact for him, or be his representative; this seemed to others so little consistent with the justice or goodness of the great and infinite God, that they thought there was no redemption necessary, and consequently that there was none, rather than admit of it upon a supposition so derogatory to the honour and attributes of that Infinite Being; and so made Jesus Christ nothing but the restorer and preacher of pure natural religion; thereby doing violence to the whole tenor of the New Testament: and, indeed, both sides will be suspected to have trespassed this way, against the written word of God, by any one who does but take it to be a collection of writings designed by God for the instruction of the illiterate bulk of mankind in the way to salvation; and therefore generally and in necessary points to be understood in the plain direct meaning of the words and phrases, such as they may be supposed to have had in the mouths of the speakers, who used them according to the language of that time and country wherein they lived, without such learned, artificial, and forced senses of them as are sought out, and put upon them in most of

the systems of divinity, according to the notions that each one has been bred up in.

2. To one that thus unbiassed reads the Scriptures, what Adam fell from, is visible, was the state of perfect obedience, which is called *justice* in the New Testament, though the word which in the original signifies justice, be translated *righteousness:* and by this fall he lost paradise, wherein was tranquillity and the tree of life; that is, he lost bliss and immortality. The penalty annexed to the breach of the law, with the sentence pronounced by God upon it, shows this. The penalty stands thus: 'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' How was this executed? He did eat; but in the day he did eat, he did not actually die, but was turned out of paradise from the tree of life, and shut out for ever from it, lest he should take thereof and live for ever. This shows that the state of paradise was a state of immortality, of life without end, which he lost that very day that he eat.[1] His life began from thence

[1] The question here discussed is one upon which the varieties of opinion are almost as numerous as the persons who have treated of it. Milton, whose theoretical notions underwent, in the course of his life, numerous alterations, always tending from the more fanatical to the less, evidently, when he wrote the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, knew not what to think of the state into which Adam fell by his transgression; but, like the erring spirits,

"Reasoned high
Of fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute,
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost."

"The Jesuits," he says, "and that sect among us which is named of Arminius, are wont to accuse us," (he was now a Presbyterian,) "of making God the author of sin, in two degrees especially, not to speak of his permission: first, because we hold, that he hath decreed some to damnation, and conse-

to shorten and waste, and to have an end; and from thence to his actual death, was but like the time of a prisoner between the sentence passed and the execution, which was in view and certain; death then entered and showed his face, which before was shut out and not known. So St. Paul, 'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin;'[1] that is a state of death and mortality: and, 'in Adam all die;'[2] that is, by reason of his transgression all men are mortal, and come to die.

3. This is so clear in these cited places, and so much the current of the New Testament, that no-

quently to sin, say they; next, because those means, which are of saving knowledge to others, he makes to them an occasion of greater sin. Yet, considering the perfection wherein man was created, *and might have stood, no decree necessitating his free-will*, but subsequent, *though not in time, yet in order to causes which were in his own power*; they might, methinks, be persuaded to absolve both God and us. Whenas the doctrine of Plato and Chrysippus, with their followers, the Academics and the Stoics, knew not what a consummate and most adorned Pandora was bestowed upon Adam to be the nurse and guide of his arbitrary happiness and perseverance; I mean his native innocence and perfection, which might have kept him from being our true Epimetheus; and though they taught of virtue and vice to be both the gift of divine destiny, they could yet give reasons not invalid, to justify the councils of God and fate from the insulsity of mortal tongues: that man's own free-will, self-corrupted, is the adequate and sufficient cause of his disobedience besides fate; as Homer also wanted not to express, both in his Iliad and Odyssey. And Manilius the poet, although in his fourth book he tells of some 'created both to sin and punishment;' yet without murmuring, and with an industrious cheerfulness, he acquits the Deity." *Book* i. ch. 3. And so Manilius might well do, because the pagan notions of deity and fate were most obscure and confused; for, to those best acquainted with ancient philosophy, it will, I doubt not, appear, that what they called fate, we call God, their revealed separate divinities being only the high ministers of this sovereign power of the universe.—Ed.

[1] Rom. v. 12. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 22.

body can deny, but that the doctrine of the gospel is, that death came on all men by Adam's sin; only they differ about the signification of the word death. For some will have it to be a state of guilt, wherein not only he but all his posterity was so involved, that every one descended of him deserved endless torment in hell-fire. I shall say nothing more here, how far, in the apprehensions of men, this consists with the justice and goodness of God, having mentioned it above: but it seems a strange way of understanding a law which requires the plainest and directest words, that by death should be meant eternal life in misery. Could any one be supposed by a law that says, "for felony thou shalt die," not that he should lose his life, but be kept alive in perpetual exquisite torments? And would any one think himself fairly dealt with, that was so used?

4. To this they would have it be also a state of necessary sinning, and provoking God in every action that men do: a yet harder sense of the word death than the other. God says, 'That in the day that thou eatest of the forbidden fruit, thou shalt die;' that is, thou and thy posterity shall be ever after incapable of doing any thing, but what shall be sinful and provoking to me, and shall justly deserve my wrath and indignation. Could a worthy man be supposed to put such terms upon the obedience of his subjects? Much less can the righteous God be supposed, as a punishment of one sin wherewith he is displeased, to put a man under a necessity of sinning continually, and so multiplying the provocation. The reason of this strange interpretation we shall perhaps find in

some mistaken places of the New Testament. I must confess, by death here I can understand nothing but a ceasing to be, the losing of all actions of life and sense. Such a death came on Adam and all his posterity, by his first disobedience in paradise; under which death they should have lain for ever, had it not been for the redemption by Jesus Christ. If by death threatened to Adam were meant the corruption of human nature in his posterity, it is strange that the New Testament should not any where take notice of it, and tell us, that corruption seized on all because of Adam's transgression, as well as it tells us so of death. But, as I remember, every one's sin is charged upon himself only.

5. Another part of the sentence was, 'Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return.' This shows that paradise was a place of bliss as well as immortality, without toil and without sorrow. But when man was turned out, he was exposed to the toil, anxiety, and frailties of this mortal life, which should end in the dust, out of which he was made, and to which he should return; and then have no more life or sense than the dust had, out of which he was made.

6. As Adam was turned out of paradise, so all his posterity was born out of it; out of the reach of the tree of life. All, like their father Adam, in a state of mortality, void of the tranquillity and bliss

of paradise. 'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.' But here will occur the common objection, that so many stumble at:—how doth it consist with the justice and goodness of God, that the posterity of Adam should suffer for his sin; the innocent be punished for the guilty? Very well, if keeping one from what he has no right to, be called a punishment. The state of immortality in paradise is not due to the posterity of Adam more than to any other creature. Nay, if God afford them a temporary mortal life, it is his gift, they owe it to his bounty, they could not claim it as their right, nor does he injure them when he takes it from them. Had he taken from mankind any thing that was their right; or did he put men in a state of misery worse than not being, without any fault or demerit of their own; this, indeed, would be hard to reconcile with the notion we have of justice, and much more with the goodness and other attributes of the Supreme Being, which he has declared of himself, and reason as well as revelation must acknowledge to be in him; unless we will confound good and evil, God and Satan. That such a state of extreme irremediable torment is worse than no being at all, if every one's sense did not determine against the vain philosophy, and foolish metaphysics of some men;[1] yet our Saviour's peremptory decision has put it past doubt, that one may be in such an estate, that it

[1] To what metaphysicians he alludes I am ignorant; but though, once born and conscious of existence, we all vehemently abhor to leave "the warm precincts of the cheerful day," and lie for ever in "cold obstruction" and Lethean sleep, we must doubtless humbly acquiesce in the truth and wisdom of our Saviour's decision. Our feelings, however, on the subject, depend

had been 'better for him not to have been born.' But that such a temporary life as we now have, with all its frailties and ordinary miseries, is better than no being, is evident by the high value we put upon it ourselves. And therefore though all die in Adam, yet none are truly punished but for their own deeds. God will render to every one—how? according to his deeds. 'To those that obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil.' 'We must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done,

greatly on our personal character. Moloch, a fierce and savage spirit, covets annihilation :—

"What doubt we to incense
His utmost ire? which to the height enraged,
Will either quite consume us, and reduce
To nothing this essential, *happier far*
Than miserable to have eternal being:
Or if our substance be indeed divine,
And cannot cease to be, we are at worst
On this side nothing."

But Belial, finding, even in the midst of torment, some solace from meditation and conjectures at the endless future, entertains other opinions :

"We must exasperate
Th' Almighty victor to spend all his rage,
And that must end us, that must be our cure
To be no more:—sad cure! *For who would lose,*
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander through eternity!
To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated night,
Devoid of sense and motion?"

Byron, in one of his gloomy moods, agrees with Moloch :

"Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
And know, whatever thou hast been,
'Tis something better not to be."—Euthanasia.—Ed.

whether it be good or bad.' And Christ himself, who knew for what he should condemn men at the last day, assures us, in the two places where he describes his proceeding at the great judgment, that the sentence of condemnation passes only on the workers of iniquity, such as neglected to fulfil the law in acts of charity.[1] And again our Saviour tells the Jews, 'that all shall come forth of their graves; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.' But here is no condemnation of any one, for what his forefather Adam had done, which it is not likely should have been omitted, if that should have been a cause why any one was adjudged to the fire with the devil and his angels. And he tells his disciples, that when he comes again with his angels in the glory of his Father, 'that then he will render to every one according to his works.'

7. Adam being thus turned out of paradise, and all his posterity born out of it, the consequence of it was, that all men should die, and remain under death for ever, and so be utterly lost.

8. From this estate of death Jesus Christ restores all mankind to life: 'as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.' How this shall be, the same apostle tells us in the foregoing verse: 'By man death came, by man also came the resurrection from the dead.' Whereby it appears, that the life which Jesus Christ restores to all men, is that life which they receive again at the

[1] Matt. vii. 23; Luke, xiii. 27; Matt. xxv. 42.

resurrection. Then they recovered from death, which otherwise all mankind should have continued under, lost for ever, as appears by St. Paul's arguing concerning the resurrection.

9. And thus men are by the second Adam restored to life again; that so by Adam's sin they may none of them lose any thing, which by their own righteousness they might have a title to. For righteousness, or an exact obedience to the law, seems by the Scripture to have a claim of right to eternal life: 'To him that worketh,' i. e. does the works of the law, 'is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt:'[1] and, 'blessed are they who do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.'[2] If any of the posterity of Adam were just, they shall not lose the reward of it,—eternal life and bliss,—by being his mortal issue: Christ will bring them all to life again; and then they shall be put every one upon his own trial, and receive judgment, as he is found to be righteous or not: and the righteous, as our Saviour says, 'shall go into eternal life.' Nor shall any one miss it, who has done what our Saviour directed the lawyer, who asked, 'What he should do to inherit eternal life?' 'Do this,' that is, what is required by the law, 'and thou shalt live.'

10. On the other side, it seems the unalterable purpose of the Divine justice, that no unrighteous person, no one that is guilty of any breach of the law, should be in paradise; but that the wages of

[1] Rom. iv. 4. [2] Rev. xxii. 14.

sin should be to every man, as it was to Adam, an exclusion of him out of that happy state of immortality, and bring death upon him. And this is so conformable to the eternal and established law of right and wrong, that it is spoken of too as if it could not be otherwise. St. James says, 'Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death,' as it were by a natural and necessary production.

11. 'Sin entered into the world, and death by sin,' says St. Paul; and, 'the wages of sin is death.' Death is the purchase of any, of every sin. 'Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.'[1] And of this St. James gives a reason: 'Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all: for he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill:' that is, He that offends in any one point, sins against the authority which established the law.

12. Here then we have the standing and fixed measures of life and death. Immortality and bliss belong to the righteous; those who have lived in an exact conformity to the law of God, are out of the reach of death: but an exclusion from paradise, and loss of immortality, is the portion of sinners; of all those who have any way broke that law, and failed of a complete obedience to it by the guilt of any one transgression. And thus mankind, by the law, are put upon the issues of life or death; as they are righteous or unrighte-

[1] Gal. iii. 10.

ous, just or unjust; that is, exact performers, or transgressors of the law.

13. But yet 'all having sinned, and come short of the glory of God,' that is, the kingdom of God in heaven, which is often called his glory, both Jews and Gentiles, so that 'by the deeds of the law no one could be justified,' it follows, that no one could then have eternal life and bliss.

14. Perhaps it will be demanded, Why did God give so hard a law to mankind, that to the apostles' time no one of Adam's issue had kept it?[1] *Answ.* It was such a law as the purity of God's nature required, and must be the law of such a creature as man, unless God would have made him a rational creature, and not required him to have lived by the law of reason, but would have countenanced in him irregularity and disobedience to that light which he had, and that rule which was suitable to his nature; which would have been to have authorized disorder, confusion, and wickedness in his creatures. For that this law was the law of reason, or, as it is called, of nature, we shall see by-and-by: and if rational creatures will not live up to the rule of their reason, who shall excuse them? If you will admit them to forsake reason in one point, why not in another? Where will you stop? To disobey God in any part of his commands (and it is he that commands what reason does) is direct rebellion; which if dispensed with in any point, government and order are at an end, and there can be no

[1] As appears by Rom. iii. and Gal. iii.

bounds set to the lawless exorbitancy of unconfined men. 'The law therefore was,' as St. Paul tells us, 'holy, just, and good,'[1] and such as it ought, and could not otherwise be.

15. This then being the case, that whoever is guilty of any sin, should certainly die, and cease to be, the benefit of life restored by Christ at the resurrection would have been no great advantage, (forasmuch as here again death must have seized upon all mankind, because all had sinned; for the wages of sin is everywhere death, as well after, as before the resurrection,) if God had not found out a way to justify some; i. e. so many as obeyed another law, which God gave, which in the New Testament is called 'the law of faith,' and is opposed to 'the law of works.'[2] And therefore the punishment of those who would not follow him was to lose their souls, i. e. their lives;[3] as is plain, considering the occasion it was spoken on.

16. The better to understand 'the law of faith,' it will be convenient in the first place to consider 'the law of works.' 'The law of works,' then, in short, is that law which requires perfect obedience, without any remission or abatement; so that by that law a man cannot be just, or justified, without an exact performance of every tittle. Such a perfect obedience in the New Testament is termed δικαιοσύνη, which we translate righteousness.

17. The language of this law is, Do this and live, transgress and die. 'Ye shall keep my sta-

[1] Rom. vii. 21. [2] Ib. iii. 27. [3] Mark, viii. 35, 38.

tutes and my judgments; which if a man do, he shall live in them.'[1] 'I gave them my statutes, and showed them my judgments; which if a man do, he shall even live in them.'[2] 'Moses,' says St. Paul, 'describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doth those things shall live in them.'[3] 'The law is not of faith; but that man that doth them shall live in them.'[4] On the other side, transgress and die; no dispensation, no atonement. 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.'

18. Where this law of works was to be found, the New Testament tells us, viz. in the law delivered by Moses. 'The law was given by Moses, but faith and truth came by Jesus Christ.' 'Did not Moses give you the law?' says our Saviour, 'and yet none of you keep the law.' And this is the law which he speaks of, where he asks the Lawyer, 'What is written in the law? How readest thou? This do, and thou shalt live.' This is that which St. Paul so often styles the 'law,' without any other distinction: 'Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law are justified.' It is needless to quote any more places; his epistles are all full of it, especially this to the Romans.

19. But the law given by Moses being not given to all mankind, how are all men sinners, since without a law there is no transgression? To this the apostle answers, 'For when the Gentiles,

[1] Lev. xviii. 5.
[2] Ezek. xx. 11.
[3] Rom. x. 5.
[4] Gal. iii. 12.

which have not the law, do (i. e. find it reasonable to do) by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and amongst one another their thoughts accusing or excusing.' By which, and other places in the following chapter, it is plain, that under the law of works is comprehended also the law of nature, knowable by reason, as well as the law given by Moses. 'For,' says St. Paul, 'we have proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:' which they could not do without a law.

20. Nay, whatever God requires any where to be done, without making any allowance for faith, that is a part of the law of works. So the forbidding Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge, was part of the law of works. Only we must take notice here, that some of God's positive commands being for peculiar ends, and suited to particular circumstances of times, places, and persons, having a limited and only temporary obligation, by virtue of God's positive injunction; such as was that part of Moses's law which concerned the outward worship or political constitution of the Jews, and is called the ceremonial and Judaical law, in contradistinction to the moral part of it; which being conformable to the eternal law of right, is of eternal obligation, and therefore remains in force still under the gospel; nor is abrogated by the 'law of faith,' as St. Paul found some ready to infer:

'Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law.'

21. Nor can it be otherwise; for were there no 'law of works,' there could be no 'law of faith.' For there could be no need of faith, which should be counted to men for righteousness, if there were no law to be the rule and measure of righteousness, which men failed in their obedience to. Where there is no law, there is no sin; all are righteous equally with or without faith.

22. The rule therefore of right is the same that ever it was; the obligation to observe it is also the same: the difference between the law of works and the law of faith is only this—that the law of works makes no allowance for failing on any occasion. Those that obey are righteous; those that in any part disobey are unrighteous, and must not expect life, the reward of righteousness. But by the law of faith, faith is allowed to supply the defect of full obedience; and so the believers are admitted to life and immortality, as if they were righteous. Only here we must take notice, that when St. Paul says, that the gospel establishes the law, he means the moral part of the law of Moses: for that he could not mean the ceremonial or political part of it, is evident by what I quoted out of him just now, where he says, 'The Gentiles that do by nature the things contained in the law, their consciences bearing witness.' For the Gentiles neither did nor thought of the Judaical or ceremonial institutions of Moses; it was only the moral part their consciences were concerned in. As for the rest, St. Paul tells the Galatians, chap. iv., they

are not under that part of the law, which, verse 3, he calls 'elements of the world;' and ver. 9, 'weak and beggarly elements.' And our Saviour himself, in his gospel-sermon on the mount, tells them, that whatever they might think, he was not come to dissolve the law, but to make it more full and strict; for that that is meant by πληρῶσαι, is evident from the following part of that chapter, where he gives the precepts in a stricter sense than they were received in before. But they are all precepts of the moral law which he reinforces: what should become of the ritual law he tells the woman of Samaria in these words: 'The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him.'

23. Thus then as to the law, in short: the civil and ritual part of the law delivered by Moses obliges not Christians, though to the Jews it were a part of the law of works; it being a part of the law of nature, that man ought to obey every positive law of God, whenever he shall please to make any such addition to the law of his nature. But the moral part of Moses's law, or the moral law, (which is everywhere the same, the eternal rule of right,) obliges Christians and all men everywhere, and is to all men the standing law of works. But Christian believers have the privilege to be under the 'law of faith' too; which is that law whereby God justifies a man for believing, though by his works he be not just or righteous; i. e. though he came short of perfect obedience to the law of

works. God alone does, or can justify or make just those who by their works are not so; which he doth by counting their faith for righteousness; i. e. for a complete performance of the law. Abraham 'believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. To him that believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works;' i. e. without a full measure of works, which is exact obedience. Saying, 'Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.'

24. This faith for which God justified Abraham, what was it? It was the believing God when he engaged his promise in the covenant he made with him. This will be plain to any one who considers these places together, Gen. xv. 6: 'He believed in the Lord,' or 'believed the Lord:' for that the Hebrew phrase 'believing in,' signifies no more but 'believing,' is plain from St. Paul's citation of this place, Rom. iv. 3, where he repeats it thus: 'Abraham believed God,' which he thus explains, 'Who against hope, believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations: according to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, nor yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God: and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was also able to per-

form. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.' By which it is clear, that the faith which God counted to Abraham for righteousness, was nothing but a firm belief of what God declared to him, and a steadfast relying on him for the accomplishment of what he had promised.

25. 'Now this,' says St. Paul, 'was not writ for his (Abraham's) sake alone, but for us also;' teaching us, that as Abraham was justified for his faith, so also ours shall be accounted to us for righteousness, if we believe God as Abraham believed him. Whereby it is plain is meant the firmness of our faith, without staggering; and not the believing the same propositions that Abraham believed; viz. that though he and Sarah were old, and past the time and hopes of children, yet he should have a son by her, and by him become the father of a great people, which should possess the land of Canaan. This was what Abraham believed, and was counted to him for righteousness: but nobody, I think, will say, that any one's believing this now, shall be imputed to him for righteousness. The law of faith then, in short, is for every one to believe what God requires him to believe, as a condition of the covenant he makes with him, and not to doubt of the performance of his promises. This the apostle intimates in the close here: 'but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.' We must therefore examine and see what God requires us to believe now, under the revelation of the gospel; for the belief of one invisible, eternal, omnipotent God, maker of heaven and earth, &c. was required before, as well as now.

26. What we are now required to believe to obtain eternal life, is plainly set down in the gospel. St. John tells us, John, iii. 36, 'He that believeth on the Son, hath eternal life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life.' What this believing on him is, we are also told in the next chapter. 'The woman saith unto him, I know that the Messiah cometh: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus said unto her, I that speak unto thee am he. The woman then went into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man that hath told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Messiah? And many of the Samaritans believed on him, for the saying of the woman; who testified, He told me all that ever I did. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, many more believed because of his words; and said to the woman, We believe not any longer because of thy saying, for we have heard ourselves, and we know that this man is truly the Saviour of the world, the Messiah.'

27. By which place it is plain, that believing on the Son, is the believing that Jesus was the Messiah; giving credit to the miracles he did, and the profession he made of himself: for those who were said to believe on him for the saying of the woman, tell the woman that they now believed not any longer because of her saying; but that having heard him themselves, they knew, i. e. believed past doubt, that he was the Messiah.

28. This was the great proposition that was then controverted concerning Jesus of Nazareth, whether he was the Messiah or no; and the assent to that,

was that which distinguished believers from unbelievers. When many of the disciples had forsaken him, upon his declaring that he was the bread of life which came down from heaven, he said to the apostles, 'Will ye also go away?' Then Simon Peter answered him; 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life: and we believe, and are sure thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' This was the faith which distinguished them from apostates and unbelievers, and was sufficient to continue them in the rank of apostles: and it was upon the same proposition, 'That Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the living God,' owned by St. Peter, that our Saviour said he would build his church.[1]

[1] Though I shall, in the Appendix, have occasion to refer more than once to the conformity of opinion between Locke and that great and excellent prelate, Jeremy Taylor, the reader may not, perhaps, be displeased to find his testimony introduced here at the outset. Nothing can be more explicit, or more to the purpose, than the following: "Now the great object which I speak of is Jesus Christ crucified. 'I have determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified;' so said St. Paul to the church of Corinth. This is the article upon the confession of which Christ built his church; viz. only upon St. Peter's creed, which was no more but this simple enunciation, 'We believe and are sure that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God;' and to this salvation particularly is promised, as in the case of Martha's creed. (John, xi. 27.) To this the Scripture gives the greatest testimony, and to all them that confess it; 'for every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God;' and, 'whosoever confesseth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God:' the believing this article is the end of writing the four Gospels: 'These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God:' and then *that this sufficient* follows: 'and that believing,' viz. this article (for this was only instanced in,) 'ye might have life through his name.' This is that great article, which, as to the nature of the things to be believed, is sufficient disposition to prepare a catechumen to bap-

29. To convince men of this, he did his miracles; and their assent to, or not assenting to this, made them to be, or not to be of his church; believers, or not believers. 'The Jews came round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us doubt? If thou be the Messiah, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.' Conformable hereunto St. John tells us, 'That many deceivers are entered into the world, who confessed not that Jesus, the Messiah, is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist: whosoever abideth not in the doctrine of the Messiah has not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of the Messiah,' i. e. that Jesus is he, 'hath both the Father and the Son.' That this is the meaning of the place, is plain from what he says in his foregoing epistle: 'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Messiah, is born of God.' And therefore, drawing to a close of his gospel, and showing the end for which he wrote it, he has these words: 'Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written,

tism; as appears in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch, whose creed was only this: 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God;' and upon this confession (saith the story) they both went into the water, and the Ethiop was washed, and became as white as snow."—Liberty of Prophesying, § I. p. 8, 9. But with this learned and eloquent work the readers of the "Sacred Classics" are already familiar; and must therefore know that it contains the entire foundation of Locke's Treatise. See particularly the sections on Faith and Heresy, which no man can read without benefit; since, were the spirit in which they are written the predominant spirit in the Christian world, great distinct bodies of heretics would scarcely be found.

that ye may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.' Whereby it is plain, that the gospel was written to induce men into a belief of this proposition—that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah; which, if they believed they should have life.

30. Accordingly, the great question amongst the Jews was, whether he were the Messiah or no: and the great point insisted on and promulgated in the gospel was, that he was the Messiah. The first glad tidings of his birth, brought to the shepherds by an angel, was in these words: 'Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for to you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord.' Our Saviour discoursing with Martha about the means of attaining eternal life, saith to her, 'Whosoever believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Messiah, the Son of God, which should come into the world.' This answer of hers showeth what it is to believe in Jesus Christ, so as to have eternal life; viz. to believe that he is the Messiah, the Son of God, whose coming was foretold by the prophets. And thus Andrew and Philip express it: Andrew says to his brother Simon, 'We have found the Messiah; which is, being interpreted, the Christ.' Philip saith to Nathaniel, 'We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write; Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph.' John, i. 41, 45. According to what the evangelist says in this place, I have, for the clearer understanding of

the Scripture, all along put Messiah for Christ; Christ being but the Greek name for the Hebrew Messiah, and both signifying The Anointed.

31. And that he was the Messiah, was the great truth he took pains to convince his disciples and apostles of; appearing to them after his resurrection: as may be seen, Luke, xxiv., which we shall more particularly consider in another place. There we read what gospel our Saviour preached to his disciples and apostles; and that, as soon as he was risen from the dead, twice the very day of his resurrection.

32. And if we may gather what was to be believed by all nations, from what was preached unto them, we may certainly know what they were commanded (Matt. ult.) to teach all nations, by what they actually did teach all nations; we may observe, that the preaching of the apostles every where in the Acts tended to this one point, to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. Indeed, now, after his death, his resurrection was also commonly required to be believed as a necessary article, and sometimes solely insisted on; it being a mark and undoubted evidence of his being the Messiah, and necessary now to be believed by those who would receive him as the Messiah. For since the Messiah was to be a Saviour and a King, and to give life and a kingdom to those who received him, as we shall see by-and-by, there could have been no pretence to have given him out for the Messiah, and to require men to believe him to be so, who thought him under the power of death, and corruption of the grave. And therefore those who believed him to be the Messiah, must believe that he

was risen from the dead; and those who believed him to be risen from the dead, could not doubt of his being the Messiah. But of this more in another place.

33. Let us see therefore how the apostles preached Christ, and what they proposed to their hearers to believe. St. Peter at Jerusalem, Acts, ii., by his first sermon, converted three thousand souls. What was his word, which, as we are told, 'they gladly received, and thereupon were baptized?' That may be seen from verse 22 to verse 36. In short this, which is the conclusion drawn from all that he had said, and which he presses on them as the thing they were to believe, viz. 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, Lord and Messiah.'

34. To the same purpose was his discourse to the Jews in the temple, Acts, iii., the design whereof you have, verse 18: 'But those things that God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that the Messiah should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.' In the next chapter, Acts, iv., Peter and John being examined about the miracle on the lame man, profess it to have been done in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, who was the Messiah, in whom alone there was salvation. The same thing they confirm to them again, Acts, v. 'And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus the Messiah.'

35. What was Stephen's speech to the council,

Acts, vii., but a reprehension to them, that they were the betrayers and murderers of the Just One? which is the title by which he plainly designs the Messiah, whose coming was foreshown by the prophets. And that the Messiah was to be without sin (which is the import of the word Just) was the opinion of the Jews, appears from John, ix. 22, compared with 24.

36. Acts, viii. Philip carries the gospel to Samaria. 'Then Philip went down to Samaria, and preached to them.' What was it he preached? You have an account of it in this one word, 'The Messiah,' verse 5. This being that alone which was required of them, to believe that Jesus was the Messiah; which, when they believed, they were baptized. And when they believed Philip's 'preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus the Messiah, they were baptized, both men and women.'

37. Philip being sent from thence, by a special call of the Spirit, to make an eminent convert, out of Isaiah preaches to him Jesus; and what it was he preached concerning Jesus, we may know by the profession of faith the eunuch made, upon which he was admitted to baptism: 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God:' which is as much as to say, I believe that he, whom you call Jesus Christ, is really and truly the Messiah that was promised. For that believing him to be the Son of God and to be the Messiah was the same thing, may appear by comparing John, i. 45, with verse 49, where Nathaniel owns Jesus to be the Messiah in these terms: 'Thou art the Son of God; thou

art the King of Israel.' So the Jews, Luke, xxii. 70, asking Christ, whether he were the Son of God; plainly demanded of him, whether he were the Messiah? Which is evident by comparing that with the three preceding verses. They ask him, verse 67, whether he were the Messiah? He answers: 'If I tell you, you will not believe;' but withal tells them, that from henceforth he should be in possession of the kingdom of the Messiah, expressed in these words: 'Hereafter shall the Son of Man sit on the right hand of the power of God:' which made them all cry out, 'Art thou then the Son of God?' i. e. dost thou then own thyself to be the Messiah? To which he replies: 'Ye say that I am.' That the Son of God was the known title of the Messiah at that time amongst the Jews, we may see also from what the Jews say to Pilate: 'We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God;' i. e. by making himself the Messiah, the prophet which was to come, but falsely; and therefore he deserves to die by the law. That this was the common signification of the Son of God, is further evident from what the chief priests, mocking him, said, when he was on the cross: 'He saved others, himself he cannot save: if he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God;' i. e. he said, he was the Messiah: but it is plainly false; for if he were, God would deliver him; for the Messiah is to be King of Israel, the Saviour of others; but this man cannot save himself. The chief-priests mention here the two titles then in use whereby the Jews com-

monly designed the Messiah, viz. 'Son of God, and King of Israel.' That of Son of God, was so familiar a compellation of the Messiah, who was then so much expected and talked of, that the Romans it seems, who lived amongst them, had learned it; as appears from Matt. xxvii. 'Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God;' this was that extraordinary person that was looked for.

38. Acts, ix. St. Paul exercising the commission to preach the gospel, which he had received in a miraculous way, 'straightway preached Christ in the synagogue, that he is the Son of God;' i. e. that Jesus was the Messiah: for Christ in this place is evidently a proper name. And that this was it which Paul preached, appears from verse 22: 'Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this is the very Christ;' i. e. the Messiah.

39. Peter, when he came to Cornelius at Cesarea; who by a vision was ordered to send for him, as Peter, on the other side, was by a vision commanded to go to him; what does he teach him? His whole discourse, Acts, x., tends to show what he says God commanded the apostles 'to preach unto the people, and to testify; that it is he (Jesus) which was ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and the dead.' And that it was 'to him that all the prophets give witness, that through his name whosoever believed in him

shall have remission of sins.' This is the Word which God sent to the children of Israel; that Word which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached. And these are the words which had been promised to Cornelius, 'Whereby he and all his house should be saved:'[1] which words amount only to thus much, that Jesus was the Messiah, the Saviour that was promised. Upon their receiving of this (for this was all was taught them) the Holy Ghost fell on them, and they were baptized. It is observable here, that the Holy Ghost fell on them before they were baptized; which in other places converts received not till after baptism. The reason whereof seems to be this; that God, by bestowing on them the Holy Ghost, did thus declare from heaven, that the Gentiles, upon believing Jesus to be the Messiah, ought to be admitted into the church by baptism as well as the Jews. Whoever reads St. Peter's defence, when he was accused by those of the circumcision, that he had not kept that distance which he ought with the uncircumcised, will be of this opinion; and see by what he says,[2] that this was the ground, and an irresistible authority to him for doing so strange a thing, as it appeared to the Jews, (who alone yet were members of the Christian church,) to admit Gentiles into their communion, upon their believing. And therefore St. Peter, in the foregoing chapter, Acts, x., before he would baptize them, proposes this question 'to those of the circumcision, which came with him, and were astonished, because that on the Gentiles

[1] Acts, xi. 14. [2] Ibid. xi.

also was poured out the gifts of the Holy Ghost: Can any one forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?' And when some of the sect of the Pharisees, who believed, thought it needful that the converted Gentiles should be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses, Peter 'rose up and said unto them, Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God made choice amongst us, that the Gentiles,' viz. Cornelius, and those here converted with him, 'by my mouth should hear the gospel, and believe. And God, who knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us, and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.' So that both Jews and Gentiles, who believed Jesus to be the Messiah, received thereupon the seal of baptism; whereby they are owned to be his, and distinguished from unbelievers. From what is above said, we may observe, that this preaching Jesus to be the Messiah, is called the Word, and the Word of God; and believing it, receiving the Word of God.[1] And the Word of the Gospel.[2] And so likewise in the history of the gospel, what Mark, iv. 14, 15, calls simply the Word, St. Luke calls the Word of God, Luke, viii. 11. And St. Matthew, xiii. 19, the Word of the Kingdom; which were, it seems, in the gospel writers synonymous terms, and are so to be understood by us.

40. But to go on: Acts, xiii. Paul preaches in the synagogue at Antioch, where he makes it his

[1] Vide Acts, x. 36, 37; xi. 1, 19, 20. [2] Acts, xv. 7.

business to convince the Jews, that 'God, according to his promise, had of the seed of David raised to Israel a Saviour, Jesus.' That he was he of whom the prophets wrote, i. e. the Messiah: and that as a demonstration of his being so, God had raised him from the dead. From whence he argues thus: 'We evangelize to you,' or bring you this gospel, 'how that the promise which was made to our fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us, in that he hath raised up Jesus again;' as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' And having gone on to prove him to be the Messiah, by his resurrection from the dead, he makes this conclusion: 'Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins; and by him all who believe, are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.' This is in this chapter called 'the word of God' over and over again. Compare verse 42 with 44, 46, 48, 49; and chapter xii. verse 24.

41. At 'Thessalonica, Paul, as his manner was, went into the synagogue, and three sabbath-days reasoned with the Jews out of the Scriptures; opening and alleging, that the Messiah must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is the Messiah. And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas: but the Jews which believed not, set the city in an uproar.'[1] Can there be any thing plainer, than that the assenting

[1] Acts, xvii.

to this proposition, that Jesus was the Messiah, was that which distinguished the believers from the unbelievers? For this was that alone which, three sabbaths, Paul endeavoured to convince them of, as the text tells us in direct words. From thence he went to Berea, and preached the same thing; and the Bereans are commended for searching the Scriptures, whether those things, i. e. which he had said, concerning Jesus's being the Messiah, were true or no.

42. The same doctrine we find him preaching at Corinth: 'And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.'[1] 'And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in spirit, and testified to the Jews, that Jesus was the Messiah. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Greeks.'

43. Upon the like occasion he tells the Jews at Antioch, 'It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing you put it off from you, we turn to the Gentiles.'[2] It is plain here, St. Paul's charging their blood on their own heads, is for opposing this single truth—that Jesus was the Messiah; that salvation or perdition depends upon believing or rejecting this one proposition. I mean, this is all is required to be believed by those who acknowledge but one eternal and invisible God, the Maker of heaven

[1] Acts, xviii. 4, 6. [2] Ibid. xiii. 46.

and earth, as the Jews did. For that there is something more required to salvation, besides believing, we shall see hereafter. In the meantime, it is fit here on this occasion to take notice, that though the apostles, in their preaching to the Jews, and the devout, (as we translate the word Σεβόμενοι, who were proselytes of the gate, and the worshippers of one eternal invisible God,) said nothing of the believing in this one true God, the Maker of heaven and earth; because it was needless to press this to those who believed and professed it already; (for to such, it is plain, were most of their discourses hitherto;) yet when they had to do with idolatrous heathens, who were not yet come to the knowledge of the one only true God; they began with that, as necessary to be believed; it being the foundation on which the other was built, and without which it could signify nothing.

44. Thus Paul, speaking to the idolatrous Lystrians, who would have sacrificed to him and Barnabas, says: 'We preach unto you, that you should turn from these vanities unto the living God, who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein; who, in times past, suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.'

45. Thus also he proceeded with the idolatrous Athenians, Acts, xvii., telling them, upon occasion of the altar dedicated to the unknown God, 'Whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you;

God, who made the world, and all things therein: seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands.——Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art, and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.' So that we see, where any thing more was necessary to be proposed to be believed, as there was to the heathen idolators, there the apostles were careful not to omit it.[1]

46. Paul, at Corinth, reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath-day, and testified to the Jews, that Jesus was the Messiah.[2] And he continued there

[1] How an author who writes in this reverential and pious strain, could ever have been accused of atheism, it is extremely difficult to conceive. Yet the Rev. John Edwards, the unworthy antagonist of Locke, accuses him of Socinianism, in which he finds "a *tang* of atheism." (Thoughts Concerning the Causes of Atheism, &c. p. 64.) Not to think as he thought on the doctrine of the Trinity seems, in his eyes, to have been akin to the worst impiety; though from that Letter of Constantine to Alexander and Arius, of which Hosius, bishop of Corduba was the bearer, and probably the author, the whole dispute appears to have been considered by the primitive Church as "a certain vain piece of a question, ill begun and more unadvisedly published; a question which no law or ecclesiastical canon defineth; a fruitless contention, the product of idle brains; a matter so nice, so obscure, so intricate, that it was neither to be explicated by the clergy, nor understood by the people."—Liberty of Prophesying. Sacred Classics, p. 62.—Ed.

[2] Acts, xviii.

a year and six months, teaching the word of God amongst them;' that is, the good news, that Jesus was the Messiah; as we have already shown is meant by the word of God. Apollos, another preacher of the gospel, when he was instructed in the way of God more perfectly, what did he teach but this same doctrine? As we may see in this account of him, 'that when he was come into Achaia, he helped the brethren much who had believed through grace; for he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly; showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah.'

47. St. Paul, in the account he gives of himself before Festus and Agrippa, professes this alone to be the doctrine he taught after his conversion: for, says he, 'Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that the Messiah should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.' Which was no more than to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. This is that, which, as we have above observed, is called the 'word of God,' Acts, xi. 1, compared with the foregoing chapter, from verse 34 to the end; and xiii. 42, compared with 44, 46, 48, 49; and xvii. 13, compared with verse 11, 3. It is also called 'the word of the gospel,' Acts, xv. 7. And this is that 'word of God,' and that gospel, which, wherever their discourses are set down, we find the apostles preached; and was that faith which made both Jews and Gentiles believers and members of the church of Christ;

purifying their hearts,[1] and carrying with it remission of sins.[2] So that all that was to be believed for justification, was no more but this single proposition—that 'Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ,' or the Messiah. All, I say, that was to be *believed* for justification: for that it was not all that was required to be *done* for justification, we shall see hereafter.

48. Though we have seen above from what our Saviour has pronounced himself, 'that he that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him;' and are taught from John, iv. 39, compared with verse 42, 'that believing on him, is believing that he is the Messiah, the Saviour of the world;' and the confession made by St. Peter, Matt. xvi. 16, 'that he is the Messiah, the Son of the living God,' being the rock on which our Saviour has promised to build his church; though this, I say, and what else we have already taken notice of, be enough to convince us what it is we are in the gospel required to believe to eternal life, without adding what we have observed from the preaching of the apostles; yet it may not be amiss, for the further clearing this matter, to observe what the evangelists deliver concerning the same thing, though in different words; which therefore, perhaps, are not so generally taken notice of to this purpose.

49. We have above observed, from the words of Andrew and Philip compared, that the Messiah,

[1] Acts, xv. 9. [2] Acts, x. 43.

and him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, signify the same thing. We shall now consider that place, John, i., a little further. Andrew says to Simon, 'We have found the Messiah.' Philip, on the same occasion, says to Nathanael, 'We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth,' the son of Joseph.' Nathanael, who disbelieved this, when upon Christ's speaking to him he was convinced of it, declares his assent to it in these words: 'Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel:' from which it is evident, that to believe him to be him of whom Moses and the prophets did write, or to be the 'Son of God,' or to be the 'King of Israel,' was in effect the same as to believe him to be the Messiah: and an assent to that was what our Saviour received for believing: for upon Nathanael's making a confession in these words, 'Thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel; Jesus answered and said to him, Because I said to thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, dost thou believe? Thou shalt see greater things than these.' I desire any one to read the latter part of the first of John, from verse 25, with attention; and tell me, whether it be not plain, that this phrase, 'the Son of God,' is an expression used for the Messiah. To which let him add Martha's declaration of her faith, in these words: 'I believe that thou art the Messiah, the Son of God, who should come into the world;' and that passage of St. John, 'That ye might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through his name;' and then tell me, whether he can doubt

that Messiah and Son of God were synonymous terms at that time amongst the Jews.

50. The prophecy of Daniel, where he is called 'Messiah the Prince;'[1] and the mention of his government and kingdom, and the deliverance by him in Isaiah, Daniel, and other prophecies understood of the Messiah, were so well known to the Jews, and had so raised their hopes of him about this time, which, by their account, was to be the time of his coming to restore the kingdom to Israel; that Herod no sooner heard of the magi's inquiry after him that was born king of the Jews; but he forthwith demanded of the chief priests and Scribes, where the Messiah should be born; not doubting, but if there were any king born to the Jews, it was the Messiah, whose coming was now the general expectation, as appears Luke, iii. 15: 'The people being in expectation, and all men musing in their hearts of John, whether he were the Messiah or not.' And when the priests and Levites sent to ask him who he was, he, understanding their meaning, answers, John, i. 20, that he was not the Messiah; but he bears witness that Jesus is the Son of God; i. e. the Messiah.

51. This looking for the Messiah at this time we see also in Simeon, who is said to be waiting for the consolation of Israel: and having the child Jesus in his arms, he says he had 'seen the salvation of the Lord.' And 'Anna coming at the same instant into the temple, she gave thanks also unto

[1] Chapter ix.

the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Israel. And of Joseph of Arimathea it is said, that 'he also expected the kingdom of God:' by all which was meant the coming of the Messiah. And Luke, xix. it is said, 'They thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.'

52. This being premised, let us see what it was that John the Baptist preached, when he first entered upon his ministry. That St. Matthew tells us, 'In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' This was a declaration of the coming of the Messiah; the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God being the same, as is clear out of several places of the evangelists; and both signifying the kingdom of the Messiah. The profession which John the Baptist made, when sent to the Jews, John, i. 19, was, 'that he was not the Messiah, but that Jesus was.' This will appear to any one who will compare verse 26, 34, with John, iii. 27, 30. The Jews being very inquisitive to know whether John were the Messiah, he positively denies it, but tells them, he was only his forerunner; and that there stood one amongst them, who would follow him, whose shoelatchet he was not worthy to untie. The next day, seeing Jesus, he says, he was the man; and that his own baptizing in water was only that Jesus might be manifested to the world; and that he knew him not, till he saw the Holy Ghost descend upon him. He that sent him to baptize having told him, that he on whom he should see the Spirit descend, and rest upon, he it was that should bap-

tize with the Holy Ghost; and that therefore he witnessed, that 'this was the Son of God, the Messiah:' and chap. iii., they came to John the Baptist, and tell him, that Jesus baptized, and that all men went to him. John answers, He has his authority from heaven: you know I never said, I was the Messiah, but that I was sent before him: he must increase, but I must decrease; for God hath sent him, and he speaks the words of God, and God hath given all things into the hands of his Son; 'and he that believes on the Son hath eternal life.' The same doctrine, and nothing else, but what was preached by the apostles afterwards; as we have seen all through the Acts, *v. g.* that Jesus was the Messiah. And that it was that John bears witness of our Saviour, as Jesus himself says, John, v. 33.

53. This also was the declaration that was given of him at his baptism, by a voice from heaven: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;' which was a declaration of him to be the Messiah; the Son of God being (as we have showed) understood to signify the Messiah. To which we may add the first mention of him after his conception, in the words of the angel to Joseph: 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus,' or Saviour; 'for he shall save his people from their sins.' It was a received doctrine in the Jewish nation, that at the coming of the Messiah all their sins should be forgiven them. These words therefore of the angel we may look on as a declaration that Jesus was the Messiah; whereof these words, 'his people,' are a further mark; which suppose him to have a people, and consequently to be a king.

54. After his baptism, Jesus himself enters upon his ministry. But before we examine what it was he proposed to be believed, we must observe, that there is a threefold declaration of the Messiah: 1. By miracles. The spirit of prophecy had now for many ages forsaken the Jews; and though their commonwealth were not quite dissolved, but that they lived under their own laws, yet they were under a foreign dominion, subject to the Romans. In this state, their account of the time being up, they were in expectation of the Messiah, and of deliverance by him in a kingdom he was to set up, according to their ancient prophecies of him; which gave them hopes of an extraordinary man yet to come to God, who with an extraordinary and divine power and miracles, should evidence his mission, and work their deliverance. And of any such extraordinary person, who should have the power of doing miracles, they had no other expectation but only of their Messiah. One great prophet and worker of miracles, and only one more, they expected, who was to be the Messiah. And therefore we see the people justified their 'believing in him,' that is, their believing him to be the Messiah, because of the miracles he did; 'and many of the people believed in him, and said, When the Messiah cometh, will he do more miracles than this man hath done?' And when the Jews, at the feast of dedication, coming about him, said unto him, How long dost thou make us doubt? If thou be the Messiah, tell us plainly; Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, bear witness of me. And John, v. 36, he says, 'I have a greater witness than that of John; for the

works which the Father hath given me to do, the same works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.' Where, by the way, we may observe, that his being 'sent by the Father,' is but another way of expressing the Messiah; which is evident from this place here, John, v., compared with that of John, x., last quoted: for there he says, that his works bear witness of him; and what was that witness? viz. that he was the Messiah. Here again he says, that his works bear witness of him; and what is that witness? viz. 'that the Father sent him.' By which we are taught, that to be sent by the Father, and to be the Messiah, was the same thing in his way of declaring himself. And accordingly we find many hearkened and assented to his testimony, and believed on him, seeing the things that he did.[1]

55. 2. Another way of declaring the coming of the Messiah, was by phrases and circumlocutions, that did signify or intimate his coming, though not in direct words pointing out the person. The most usual of these were, 'The kingdom of God, and of heaven:[2] because it was that which was

[1] John, iv. 53, and xi. 45; and elsewhere.

[2] From the extreme acuteness and subtilty of his mind, Locke, who here seems to be perfectly right in his views, sometimes introduces too much nicety, perhaps, into his interpretations of Scripture, though the method he followed and the pains he took to arrive at truth deserve the admiration of every Christian. In his Notes on the Epistle to the Galatians, i. 4,—ὅπως ἐξέληται ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ ἐνεστῶτος αἰῶνος πονηροῦ—'that he might take us out of this present evil world, or age;' so the Greek words signify. Whereby, he says, it cannot be thought that St. Paul meant that Christians were to be immediately removed into the other world. Therefore ἐνεστὼς αἰὼν must signify something else than present world, in the ordinary im-

oftenest spoken of the Messiah, in the Old Testament, in very plain words; and a kingdom was that which the Jews most looked after and wished for. In that known place, Isaiah, ix.: 'The government shall be upon his shoulders; he shall be called the Prince of peace: of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end: upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with justice, from henceforth, even for ever.' Micah, v. 2. 'But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thou-

port of these words in English. Αἰὼν οὗτος, 1 Cor. ii. 6, 8, and in other places, plainly signifies the Jewish nation, under the Mosaical constitution; and it suits very well with the apostle's design in this Epistle, that it should do so here. God has in this world but one kingdom and one people. The nation of the Jews were the kingdom and people of God whilst the law stood. And this kingdom of God under the Mosaical constitution was called αἰὼν οὗτος, 'this age,' or, as it is commonly translated, 'this world,' to which αἰὼν ἐνεστὼς, 'the present world, or age,' here answers. But the kingdom of God, which was to be under the Messiah, wherein the economy and constitution of the Jewish church, and the nation itself, that, in opposition to Christ, adhered to it, was to be laid aside, is in the New Testament called αἰὼν μέλλων,—'the world, or age, to come;' so that Christ's taking them out of the present world, may, without any violence to the words, be understood to signify his setting them free from the Mosaical constitution. This is suitable to the design of this Epistle, and what St. Paul has declared in many other places. See Col. ii. 14—17, and 20, which agrees with this place, and Rom. vii. 4, 6. The law is said to be 'contrary to us,' Col. ii. 14, and to 'work wrath,' Rom. iv. 15, and St. Paul speaks very diminishingly of the ritual parts of it in many places. But yet, if all this may not be thought sufficient to justify the applying of the epithet πονηροῦ, 'evil,' to it, that scruple will be removed, if we take ἐνέστως αἰὼν, 'this present world,' here, for the Jewish constitution and nation together, in which sense it may very well be called evil, though the apostle, out of his wonted tenderness to his nation, forbears to name them openly, and uses a doubtful expression, which might comprehend the heathen world also, though he chiefly pointed at the Jews.—Ed.

sands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be the ruler in Israel.' And Daniel, besides that he calls him 'Messiah the prince,'[1] in the account of his vision 'of the Son of man,' says, 'There was given him dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away; and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.'[2] So that the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of heaven, were common phrases amongst the Jews, to signify the times of the Messiah. 'One of the Jews that sat at meat with him, said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.' The Pharisees demanded, 'When the kingdom of God should come?' and St. John Baptist came, saying, 'Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand:' a phrase he would not have used in preaching, had it not been understood.

56. There are other expressions that signified the Messiah, and his coming, which we shall take notice of as they come in our way. 3. By plain and direct words, declaring the doctrine of the Messiah; speaking out that Jesus was he; as we see the apostles did, when they went about preaching the gospel, after our Saviour's resurrection. This was the open, clear way, and that which one would think the Messiah himself, when he came, should have taken; especially if it were of that moment, that upon men's believing him to be the Messiah depended the forgiveness of their sins.

[1] Ch. ix. 25. [2] Ibid. vii.

And yet we see that our Saviour did not; but, on the contrary, for the most part, made no other discovery of himself, at least in Judea, and at the beginning of his ministry, but in the two former ways, which were more obscure; not declaring himself to be the Messiah, any otherwise than as it might be gathered from the miracles he did, and the conformity of his life and actions with the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning him; and from some general discourses of the kingdom of the Messiah being come, under the name of the 'kingdom of God,' and 'of heaven.' Nay, so far was he from publicly owning himself to be the Messiah, that he forbade the doing of it: 'He asked his disciples, Whom do men say that I am? And they answered, John the Baptist; but some say Elias, and others, one of the prophets.' (So that it is evident, that even those who believed him an extraordinary person, knew not yet who he was, or that he gave himself out for the Messiah; though this was in the third year of his ministry, and not a year before his death.) 'And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answered, and said unto him, Thou art the Messiah. And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.[1] And devils came out of many, crying, 'Thou art the Messiah, the Son of God: and he rebuking them, suffered them not to speak, that they knew him to be the Messiah.'[2] 'Unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God: and he straitly charged them that they should not make him known.' Here again we may observe,

[1] Luke, iv. 41. [2] Mark, iii. 11, 12.

from the comparing of the two texts, that 'thou art the Son of God,' or 'thou art the Messiah,' were indifferently used for the same thing. But to return to the matter in hand.

57. This concealment of himself will seem strange, in one who was come to bring light into the world, and was to suffer death for the testimony of the truth. This reservedness will be thought to look as if he had a mind to conceal himself, and not to be known to the world for the Messiah, nor to be believed on as such. But we shall be of another mind, and conclude this proceeding of his according to divine wisdom, and suited to a fuller manifestation and evidence of his being the Messiah, when we consider, that he was to fill out the time foretold of his ministry; and, after a life illustrious in miracles and good works, attended with humility, meekness, patience, and sufferings, and every way conformable to the prophecies of him, should be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and with all quiet and submission be brought to the cross, though there were no guilt nor fault found in him. This could not have been, if, as soon as he appeared in public, and began to preach, he had presently professed himself to have been the Messiah, the King that owned that kingdom he published to be at hand: for the sanhedrim would then have laid hold on it, to have got him into their power, and thereby have taken away his life; at least, they would have disturbed his ministry, and hindered the work he was about. That this made him cautious, and avoid, as much as he could, the occasions of provoking them, and falling into their hands, is plain from John, vii. 1: 'After

these things Jesus walked in Galilee;' out of the way of the chief priests and rulers; 'for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.' Thus making good what he foretold them at Jerusalem, when at the first passover, at his beginning to preach the gospel, upon his curing the man at the pool of Bethesda, they sought to kill him. John, v. 'Ye have not,' says he, 'his word abiding amongst you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.' This was spoken more particularly to the Jews of Jerusalem, who were the forward men, zealous to take away his life; and it imports that because of their unbelief and opposition to him, 'the word of God, that is, the preaching of the kingdom of the Messiah, which is often called 'the word of God,' did not stay amongst them:—he could not stay amongst them, preach and explain to them the kingdom of the Messiah.

58. That the word of God here signifies the word of God that should make Jesus known to them to be the Messiah, is evident from the context; and this meaning of this place is made good by the event: for after this we hear no more of Jesus at Jerusalem, until the pentecost come twelvemonth; though it is not to be doubted but that he was there the next passover, and other feasts between, but privately. And now at Jerusalem, at the feast of pentecost, near fifteen months after, he says very little of any thing, and not a word of the kingdom of heaven being come or at hand; nor did he any miracle there. And returning to Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles, it is plain, that from this time till then, which was a year and a half, he had not

taught them at Jerusalem. For, 1, It is said, that he teaching in the temple at the feast of tabernacles, 'The Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?'[1] a sign they had not been used to his preaching; for if they had, they would not now have marvelled. 2, He says thus to them: 'Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keep the law? Why go you about to kill me? One work, or miracle, I did here amongst you, and ye all marvel. Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision, and ye on the sabbath-day circumcise a man; if a man on the sabbath-day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken, are ye angry with me, because I have made a man every way whole on the sabbath-day?' Which is a direct defence of what he did at Jerusalem a year and a half before. The work he here speaks of we find reported, John, v. He had not preached to them there from that time till this, but had made good what he then told them: 'Ye have not the word of God remaining among you, because whom he hath sent, ye believe not:' whereby, I think, he signifies his not staying and being frequent amongst them at Jerusalem, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, because their great unbelief, opposition, and malice to him, would not permit it.

59. This was manifestly so in fact: for the first miracle he did at Jerusalem, which was at the second passover after his baptism, brought him in danger of his life. Hereupon we find he forbore preaching again there till the feast of tabernacles, immediately preceding his last passover: so that

[1] John, vii.

till half a year before his passion, he did but one miracle, and preached but once publicly at Jerusalem. These trials he made there; but found their unbelief such, that if he had staid and persisted to preach the good tidings of the kingdom, and to show himself by miracles among them, he could not have had time and freedom to do those works which his Father had given him to finish, as he says, verse 36. They all imaginable ways attacked him, and he as readily eluded all their attempts, by the wonderful quickness and conduct of an unparalleled wisdom. Here, at this feast of tabernacles, 'The Scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; they say unto him, Master, Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned, but what sayest thou? This they said tempting him, that they might accuse him.' It is plain they hoped that this criminal cause of a woman just taken in the fact, brought before him in the sight of the people, would draw him, if he would preserve the opinion of being the Messiah, their king, to give judgment in it, and by the exercise of such an authority expose him to the Roman deputy. Some such accusation they watched for; but they could never get any such advantage against him: he marvellously defeated their design, and without lessening himself, sent them away covered with shame and silence.

60. When, upon the curing of the withered hand on the sabbath-day, 'The Pharisees took counsel with the Herodians how they might destroy him, Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed

him, and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond Jordan, and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude; when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him, and he healed them all, and charged them that they should not make him known; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, saying, Behold my servant whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles: he shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.'[1]

61. And John, xi. Upon the news of our Saviour's raising Lazarus from the dead, 'the chief priests and Pharisees convened the sanhedrim, and said, What do we? For this man does many miracles. When from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. Jesus therefore walked no more openly amongst the Jews.' His miracles had now so much declared him to be the Messiah, that the Jews could no longer bear him, nor he trust himself amongst them; 'but went thence into a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.' This was but a little before his last passover, as appears by the following words: 'And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand:' and he could not, now his miracles had made him so well known, have been secure the little time that remained till his hour was fully come, if he had not, with his wonted and necessary caution,

[1] Matt. xii; Mark, iii.

withdrawn, and walked no more openly amongst the Jews, till his time (at the next passover) was fully come; and then again he appeared amongst them openly.

62. Nor would the Romans have suffered him, if he had gone about preaching that he was the king whom the Jews expected. Such an accusation would have been forwardly brought against him by the Jews, if they could have heard it out of his own mouth; and that had been his public doctrine to his followers, which was openly preached by his apostles after his death, when he appeared no more. And of this they were accused, Acts, xvii. 'But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city in an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. And when they found them (Paul and Silas) not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also, whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying, that there is another king, one Jesus. And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things: and when they had taken security of Jason and the other, they let them go.'

63. Though the magistrates of the world had no great regard to the talk of a king, who had suffered death, and appeared no longer anywhere; yet if our Saviour had openly declared this of himself in his lifetime, with a train of disciples and followers

everywhere owning and crying him up for their king, the Roman governor of Judea could not have forborne to have taken notice of it, and have made use of their force against him. This the Jews were not mistaken in; and therefore made use of it as the strongest accusation, and likeliest to prevail with Pilate against him for the taking away his life; it being treason, and an unpardonable offence, which could not escape death from a Roman deputy, without the forfeiture of his own life. Thus then they accuse him to Pilate: 'We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar; saying, that he himself is a king;' or rather, the Messiah, the King.

64. Our Saviour indeed, now that his time was come, (and he in custody, and forsaken of all the world, and so out of all danger of raising any sedition or disturbance,) owns himself to Pilate to be a King: after having first told Pilate, 'that his kingdom was not of this world;' and for a kingdom in another world, Pilate knew that his master at Rome concerned not himself. But had there been any the least appearance of truth in the allegations of the Jews, that he had perverted the nation, forbidding to pay tribute to Cæsar, or drawing the people after him as their king, Pilate would not so readily have pronounced him innocent. But we see what he said to his accusers: Pilate, 'when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers of the people, said unto them, You have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people; and behold I having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof you accuse

him; no, nor yet Herod, for I sent you to him; and lo, nothing worthy of death is done by him.' And therefore finding a man of that mean condition, and innocent life, (no mover of seditions, or disturber of the public peace,) without a friend or a follower, he would have dismissed him, as a king of no consequence; as an innocent man, falsely and maliciously accused by the Jews.

65. How necessary this caution was in our Saviour, to say or do nothing that might justly offend, or render him suspected to the Roman governor, and how glad the Jews would have been to have any such thing against him, we may see Luke, xx. 20: 'The chief priests and the Scribes watched him, and sent forth spies, who should feign themselves just men, that might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.' And the very thing wherein they hoped to entrap him in this place was paying tribute to Cæsar, which they afterwards falsely accused him of. And what would they have done, if he had before them professed himself to have been the Messiah, their king and deliverer?

66. And here we may observe the wonderful providence of God, who had so ordered the state of the Jews, at the time when his Son was to come into the world, that though neither their civil constitution nor religious worship were dissolved, yet the power of life and death was taken from them; whereby he had an opportunity to publish the kingdom of the Messiah; that is, his own royalty, under the name of the kingdom of God and of

heaven; which the Jews well enough understood, and would certainly have put him to death for, had the power been in their own hands. But this being no matter of accusation to the Romans, hindered him not from speaking of the kingdom of heaven, as he did; sometimes in reference to his appearing in the world, and being believed on by particular persons; sometimes in reference to the power that should be given him by the Father at the resurrection; and sometimes in reference to his coming to judge the world at the last day, in the full glory and completion of his kingdom. These were ways of declaring himself, which the Jews could lay no hold on, to bring him in danger with Pontius Pilate, and get him seized and put to death.

67. Another reason there was that hindered him as much as the former from professing himself in express words to be the Messiah; and that was, that the whole nation of the Jews expecting at this time their Messiah, and deliverance by him from the subjection they were in to a foreign yoke, the body of the people would certainly, upon his declaring himself to be the Messiah their king have rose up in rebellion, and set him at the head of them. And, indeed, the miracles that he did, so much disposed them to think him to be the Messiah, that, though shrouded under the obscurity of a mean condition, and a very private simple life; though he passed for a Galilean, (his birth at Bethlehem being then concealed,) and assumed not to himself any power or authority, or so much as the name of the Messiah; yet he could hardly avoid being set up by a tumult, and proclaimed their

king. So John tells us, chap. vi. 'Then those men, when they had seen the miracles that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. When, therefore, Jesus perceived that they would come to take him by force to make him king, he departed again into a mountain, himself alone.' This was upon his feeding of five thousand with five barley loaves and two fishes. So hard was it for him, doing those miracles which were necessary to testify his mission, and which often drew great multitudes after him, to keep the heady and hasty multitude from such disorder as would have involved him in it, and have disturbed the course, and cut short the time of his ministry, and drawn on him the reputation and death of a turbulent seditious malefactor; contrary to the design of his coming, which was to be offered up a lamb, blameless and void of offence; his innocence appearing to all the world, even to him that delivered him up to be crucified. This it would have been impossible to have avoided, if in his preaching everywhere, he had openly assumed to himself the title of their Messiah; which was all was wanting to set the people in a flame; who, drawn by his miracles, and the hopes of finding a deliverer in so extraordinary a man, followed him in great numbers. We read everywhere of multitudes; and in Luke, xii. 1, of myriads that were gathered about him. This conflux of people, thus disposed, would not have failed, upon his declaring himself to be the Messiah, to have made a commotion, and with force set him up for their king. It is plain, therefore, from these two reasons, why (though he came to preach the gospel, and convert the world to a belief of his being the Messiah; and though

he says so much of his kingdom, under the title of the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of heaven) he yet makes it not his business to persuade them that he himself is the Messiah; nor does, in his public preaching, declare himself to be him. He inculcates to the people, on all occasions, that the kingdom of God is come. He shows the way of admittance into this kingdom, viz. repentance and baptism; and teaches the laws of it, viz. good life, according to the strictest rules of virtue and morality. But who the king was of this kingdom, he leaves to his miracles to point out to those who would consider what he did, and make the right use of it now; or to witness to those who should hearken to the apostles hereafter, when they preached it in plain words, and called upon them to believe it, after his resurrection; when there should be no longer room to fear that it should cause any disturbance in civil societies and the governments of the world. But he could not declare himself to be the Messiah, without manifest danger of tumult and sedition: and the miracles he did declared it so much, that he was fain often to hide himself, and withdraw from the concourse of the people. The leper that he cured, Mark, i., though forbid to say any thing, yet 'blazed it so abroad, that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places,' being in retirement, as appears from Luke, v., and there 'they came to him from every quarter.' And thus he did more than once.

68. This being premised, let us take a view of the promulgation of the gospel by our Saviour himself, and see what it was he taught the world, and

required men to believe. The first beginning of his ministry, whereby he showed himself, seems to be at Cana in Galilee, soon after his baptism, where he turned water into wine; of which St. John says thus: 'This beginning of miracles Jesus made, and manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him.' His disciples here believed in him; but we hear not of any other preaching to them, but by this miracle, whereby he manifested his glory; that is, of being the Messiah, the prince. So Nathanael, without any other preaching, but only our Saviour's discovering to him that he knew him after an extraordinary manner, presently acknowledges him to be the Messiah; crying, 'Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.' From hence, staying a few days at Capernaum, he goes to Jerusalem to the passover; and there he drives the traders out of the temple, saying, 'Make not my Father's house a house of merchandize.' Where we see he uses a phrase which, by interpretation, signifies that he was the Son of God, though at that time unregarded. Hereupon the Jews demand, 'What sign dost thou show us, since thou doest these things? Jesus answered, Destroy ye this temple, and in three days I will raise it again.' This is an instance of what way Jesus took to declare himself; for it is plain by their reply the Jews understood him not, nor his disciples neither; for it is said, 'When, therefore, he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he said this to them: and they believed the Scripture, and the saying of Jesus to them.'

69. This therefore we may look on, in the beginning, as a pattern of Christ's preaching, and

showing himself to the Jews; which he generally followed afterwards; viz. such a manifestation of himself, as every one at present could not understand; but yet carried such an evidence with it to those who were well disposed now, or would reflect on it when the whole course of his ministry was over, as was sufficient clearly to convince them that he was the Messiah. The reason of this method used by our Saviour, the Scripture gives us here, at this his first appearing in public, after his entrance upon his ministry, to be a rule and light to us in the whole course of it: for the next verse takes notice that many believed on him 'because of his miracles,' (which was all the preaching they had.) It is said, 'But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men;'[1] that is, he declared not himself so openly to be the Messiah, their king, as to put himself in the power of the Jews, by laying himself open to their malice, who he knew would be so ready to lay hold on it to accuse him; for, as the next verse shows, he knew well enough what was in them. We may here further observe, that 'believing in his name,' signifies believing him to be the Messiah. Verse 22 tells us, that 'many at the passover believed in his name, when they saw the miracles that he did.' What other faith could these miracles produce in them who saw them, but that this was he of whom the Scripture spoke, who was to be their deliverer?

70. Whilst he was now at Jerusalem, Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, comes to him, to whom

[1] John, ii.

he preaches eternal life by faith in the Messiah, but in general terms, without naming himself to be that Messiah, though his whole discourse tends to it. This is all we hear of our Saviour the first year of his ministry, but only his baptism, fasting, and temptation in the beginning of it, and spending the rest of it, after the passover in Judea, with his disciples, baptizing there. But 'when he knew that the Pharisees reported that he had made and baptized more disciples than John, he left Judea, and got out of their way again into Galilee. In his way back, by the well of Sichar, he discourses with the Samaritan woman; and after having opened to her the true and spiritual worship which was at hand, which the woman presently understands of the times of the Messiah, who was then looked for; thus she answers: 'I know that the Messiah cometh: when he is come, he will tell us all things.' Whereupon our Saviour, though we hear no such thing from him in Jerusalem or Judea, or to Nicodemus; yet here, to this Samaritan woman, he in plain and direct words owns and declares, that he himself, who talked with her, was the Messiah. This would seem very strange, that he should be more free and open to a Samaritan than he was to the Jews, were not the reason plain from what we have observed above. He was now out of Judea, with a people with whom the Jews had no commerce; who were not disposed, out of envy, as the Jews were, to seek his life, or to accuse him to the Roman governor, or to make an insurrection to set a Jew up for their king. What the consequence was of his discourse with this Samaritan woman we have an ac-

count: 'she left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Messiah? And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. And many more believed because of his own word; and said unto the woman, Now we believe not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves; and we know (that is, are fully persuaded) that it is indeed the Messiah, the Saviour of the world.' By comparing John, iv. verse 39, with 41 and 42, it is plain, that 'believing on him,' signifies no more than believing him to be the Messiah.

71. From Sichar Jesus goes to Nazareth, the place he was bred up in, and there, reading in the synagogue a prophecy concerning the Messiah, out of the sixty-first of Isaiah, he tells them, 'This day is the Scripture fulfilled in your ears.' But being in danger of his life at Nazareth, he leaves it for Capernaum: and then, as St. Matthew informs us, 'he began to preach, and say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Or, as St. Mark has it, 'preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe in the gospel;' that is, believe this good news. This removing to Capernaum, and seating himself there in the borders of Zabulon and Naphtali, was, as St. Matthew observes, that a prophecy of Isaiah

might be fulfilled. Thus the actions and circumstances of his life, answered the prophecies, and declared him to be the Messiah. And by what St. Mark says in this place, it is manifest that the gospel which he preached, and required them to believe, was no other but the good tidings of the coming of the Messiah, and of his kingdom, the time being now fulfilled. In his way to Capernaum, being come to Cana, a nobleman of Capernaum came to him, 'and besought him that he would come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.' Then he returning homewards, and finding that his son began to 'mend at the same hour in which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth; he himself believed, and his whole house.' Here this nobleman is, by the apostle, pronounced to be a believer. And what does he believe? even that which Jesus complains, 'they would not believe, except they saw signs and wonders; which could be nothing but what those of Samaria, in the same chapter, believed; viz. that he was the Messiah: for we nowhere in the gospel hear of any thing else that had been proposed to be believed by them.

72. Having done miracles, and cured all their sick at Capernaum, he says, 'Let us go to the adjoining towns, that I may preach there also; for therefore came I forth.' Or, as St. Luke has it, chap. iv., he tells the multitude, who would have kept him, that he might not go from them: 'I must evangelize,' or tell the good tidings of the 'kingdom of God' to other cities also, for there-

fore am I sent. And St. Matthew, chap. iv., tells us how he executed this commission he was sent on. 'And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and curing all diseases.' This then was what he was sent to preach everywhere, viz. the gospel of the kingdom of the Messiah; and by the miracles and good he did, let them know who was the Messiah.

73. Hence he goes up to Jerusalem, to the second passover since the beginning of his ministry. And here discoursing to the Jews, who sought to kill him, upon occasion of the man whom he had cured carrying his bed on the sabbath-day, and for making God his Father, he tells them, that he wrought these things by the power of God, and that he shall do greater things; for that the dead shall, at his summons, be raised; and that he, by a power committed to him from his Father, shall judge them; and that he is sent by his Father; and that whoever shall hear his word, and believe in him that sent him, has eternal life. This, though a clear description of the Messiah, yet we may observe that here, to the angry Jews, who sought to kill him, he says not a word of his kingdom, nor so much as names the Messiah; but yet that he is the Son of God, and sent from God, he refers them to the testimony of John the Baptist, to the testimony of his own miracles, and of God himself in the voice from heaven, and of the Scriptures, and of Moses. He leaves them to learn from these the truth they were to believe, viz. that he was the Messiah sent from God. This you may read more at large, John, v.

74. The next place where we find him preaching was on the mount. This is by much the longest sermon we have of his anywhere; and, in all likelihood, to the greatest auditory: for it appears to have been to the people gathered to him from Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem, and from beyond Jordan; and that came out of Idumea, and from Tyre and Sidon, mentioned Mark, iii. and Luke, vi. But in this whole sermon of his we do not find one word of believing, and therefore no mention of the Messiah, or any intimation to the people who himself was: the reason whereof we may gather from Matt. xii., where 'Christ forbids them to make him known;' which supposes them to know already who he was. For that this twelfth chapter of Matthew ought to precede the sermon in the mount is plain, by comparing it with Mark ii., beginning at verse 13, to Mark, iii. 8., and comparing those chapters of St. Mark with Luke, vi. And I desire my reader, once for all, here to take notice, that I have all along observed the order of time in our Saviour's preaching, and have not, as I think, passed by any of his discourses. In this sermon our Saviour only teaches them what were the laws of his kingdom, and what they must do who were admitted into it; of which I shall have occasion to speak more at large in another place, being at present only enquiring what our Saviour proposed as matter of faith to be believed.

75. After this, John the Baptist sends to him this message, asking, 'Art thou he that should come, or do we expect another? That is, in short, Art thou the Messiah? And if thou art, why

dost thou let me, thy forerunner, languish in prison? Must I expect deliverance from any other? To which Jesus returns this answer: 'Tell John what you have seen and heard:—the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached; and blessed is he who is not offended in me.' What it is to be 'offended' or 'scandalized in him we may see by comparing Matt. xiii. 28, and Mark, iv. 17, with Luke, viii. 13.; for what the two first call *scandalized,* the last calls *standing off from,* or *forsaking;* that is, not receiving him as the Messiah, (vide Mark, vi. 1—6,) or revolting from him. Here Jesus refers John, as he did the Jews before, to the testimony of his miracles, to know who he was; and this was generally his preaching, whereby he declared himself to be the Messiah; who was the only prophet to come, whom the Jews had any expectation of; nor did they look for any other person to be sent to them with the power of miracles, but only the Messiah. His miracles, we see by his answer to John the Baptist, he thought a sufficient declaration amongst them that he was the Messiah. And therefore, upon his curing the possessed of the devil, the dumb, and blind, Matt. xii., the people who saw the miracle said, 'Is not this the Son of David?' as much as to say, Is not this the Messiah? Whereat the Pharisees being offended, said, he cast out devils by Beelzebub. Jesus showing the falsehood and vanity of their blasphemy, justifies the conclusion the people made from this miracle, saying, that his casting out devils by the Spirit of God, was an evidence that the kingdom of the Messiah was come.

76. One thing more there was in the miracles done by his disciples, which showed him to be the Messiah—that they were done in his name. 'In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk,' says St. Peter to the lame man whom he cured in the temple, Acts, iii. And how far the power of that name reached, they themselves seem to wonder, Luke, x.: 'And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject to us in thy name.' From this message from John the Baptist, he takes occasion to tell the people, that John was the forerunner of the Messiah; that from the time of John the Baptist the kingdom of the Messiah began; to which time all the prophets and the law pointed.[1] 'Afterwards he went through every city and village, preaching and showing the good tidings of the kingdom of God.' Here we see, as everywhere, what his preaching was, and consequently what was to be believed.

77. Soon after, he preaches from a boat to the people on the shore. His sermon at large we may read, Matt. xiii. Mark, iv. and Luke, viii. But this is very observable, that this second sermon of his here, is quite different from his former in the mount: for that was all so plain and intelligible that nothing could be more so; whereas this is all so involved in parables, that even the apostles themselves did not understand it. If we inquire into the reason of this, we shall possibly have some light from the different subjects of these two sermons. There he preached to the people only

[1] Luke, vii.; Matt. xi.

morality; clearing the precepts of the law from the false glosses which were received in those days, and setting forth the duties of a good life in their full obligation and extent,[1] beyond what the judiciary laws of the Israelites did, or the civil laws of any country could prescribe or take notice of. But here, in this sermon by the seaside, he speaks of nothing but the kingdom of the Messiah, which he does all in parables. One reason whereof St. Matthew gives us, chap. xiii. 'That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things that have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.' Another reason our Saviour himself gives of it: 'Because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be

[1] Every thing necessary to make a man a Christian is clearly delivered in the New Testament. This Locke frequently insists on, and in this all wise and moderate men agree. Milton, in Scripture more deeply read than Locke, or, perhaps, than any other writer with whom I am acquainted, observes on this subject—"It is true, there be some books, and especially some places in those books, that remain clouded; yet ever that which is most necessary to be known is most easy; and that which is most difficult, so far expounds itself ever, as to tell us how little it imports our saving knowledge. Hence, to infer a general obscurity over all the texts, is a mere suggestion of the devil to dissuade men from reading it, and casts an aspersion of dishonour both upon the mercy, truth, and wisdom of God. We count it no gentleness or fair dealing in a man of power amongst us, to require strict and punctual obedience, and yet give out all his commands ambiguous and obscure, we should think he had a plot upon us; certainly such commands were no commands, but snares. The very essence of truth is plainness and brightness, the darkness and crookedness is our own. The wisdom of God created understanding, fit and proportionable to truth, the object and end of it, as the eye to the thing visible."—Reformation in England. Book I.—Ed.

given, and he shall have more abundantly; but whosoever hath not,' that is, improves not the talents that he hath, 'from him shall be taken away even that he hath.'

78. One thing it may not be amiss to observe, that our Saviour here, in the explication of the first of these parables to his apostles, calls the preaching of the kingdom of the Messiah, simply, 'the Word;' and, Luke, viii. 21, 'the Word of God:' from whence St. Luke, in the Acts, often mentions it under the name of 'the Word,' and 'the Word of God,' as we have elsewhere observed; to which I shall here add that of Acts, viii. 4: 'Therefore they that were scattered abroad, went everywhere preaching the Word;' which Word, as we have found by examining what they preached all through their history, was nothing but this, that 'Jesus was the Messiah:' I mean, this was all the doctrine they proposed to be believed: for what they taught, as well as our Saviour, contained a great deal more; but that concerned practice, and not belief. And therefore our Saviour says, in the place before quoted, Luke, viii. 21, 'They are my mother and my brethren who hear the word of God, and do it:' obeying the law of the Messiah, their king, being no less required than their believing that Jesus was the Messiah, the king and deliverer that was promised them. Matt. ix. we have an account again of his preaching; what it was and how:—'And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease amongst the people.' He acquainted them that the kingdom of the Messiah was come,

and left it to his miracles to instruct and convince them that he was the Messiah.

79. When he sent his apostles abroad, their commission to preach we have in these words: 'As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand: heal the sick,' &c. All that they had to preach was that the kingdom of the Messiah was come. Whosoever should not receive them, the messengers of this good tidings, nor hearken to their message, incurred a heavier doom than Sodom and Gomorrah at the day of judgment. But, 'Whosoever shall confess me before men, I will confess him before my Father who is in heaven.' What this confessing of Christ is, we may see by comparing John, xii. 4, with ix. 22: 'Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.' And 'These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was the Messiah, he should be put out of the synagogue.' By which places it is evident, that to confess him, was to confess that he was the Messiah. From which give me leave to observe also, (what I have cleared from other places, but cannot be too often remarked, because of the different sense has been put upon that phrase,) viz. that believing on or in him (for εἰς ἀυτὸν is rendered either way by the English translation) signifies believing that he was the Messiah. For many of the rulers (the text says) believed on him; but they durst not confess what they believed, 'for fear they should be put out of the synagogue.' Now the offence for which it was

agreed that any one should be put out of the synagogue was, if he 'did confess that Jesus was the Messiah.' Hence we may have a clear understanding of that passage of St. Paul to the Romans,[1] where he tells them positively what is the faith he preaches: 'That is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved:' and that also of 1 John, iv. 14, 15: 'We have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world: whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.' Where confessing Jesus to be the Son of God, is the same with confessing him to be the Messiah; those two expressions being understood, amongst the Jews, to signify the same thing, as we have shown already. How calling him the Son of God came to signify that he was the Messiah, would not be hard to show; but it is enough that it appears plainly that it was so used, and had that import amongst the Jews at that time; which if any one desires to have further evidenced to him, he may add Matt. xxvi. 63, John, vi. 69, and xi. 27, and xx. 31, to those places before occasionally taken notice of.

80. As was the apostles' commission, such was their performance, as we read Luke ix. 6: 'They departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere.' Jesus bid them preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' And St. Luke tells us, they went through

[1] Rom. x. 8, 9.

the towns, preaching the gospel; a word which in Saxon answers well the Greek Εὐαγγέλιον, and signifies, as that does, 'good news.' So that what the inspired writers call the gospel, is nothing but the good tidings that the Messiah and his kingdom was come; and so it is to be understood in the New Testament; and so the angel calls it 'good tidings of great joy,' bringing the first news of our Saviour's birth. And this seems to be all that his disciples were at that time sent to preach. So Luke, ix. 59, 60. To him that would have excused his present attendance, because of burying his father, 'Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.' When I say this was all they were to preach, I must be understood, that this was the faith they preached; but with it they joined obedience to the Messiah, whom they received for their king. So likewise when he sent out the seventy, Luke, x., their commission was in these words: 'Heal the sick, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.'

81. After the return of his apostles to him, he sits down with them on a mountain; and a great multitude being gathered about them, St. Luke tells us, 'The people followed him, and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God; and healed them that had need of healing.' This was his preaching to this assembly, which consisted of five thousand men, besides women and children; all which great multitude he fed with five loaves and two fishes. And what this miracle wrought upon them St. John tells us, chap, vi.: 'Then these men, when they had seen

the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world;' that is, the Messiah: for the Messiah was the only person that they expected from God, and this the time they looked for him. And hence John the Baptist, Matt. xi. 3, styles him, 'He that should come;' as in other places, 'come from God,' or 'sent from God,' are phrases used for the Messiah. Here we see our Saviour keeps to his usual method of preaching: he speaks to them of the kingdom of God, and does miracles, by which they might understand him to be the Messiah, whose kingdom he spake of. And here we have the reason also, why he so much concealed himself, and forbore to own his being the Messiah. For what the consequence was of the multitudes' but thinking him so, when they were got together, St. John tells us in the very next words: 'When Jesus then perceived that they would come and take him by force to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain, himself alone.' If they were so ready to set him up for their king, only because they gathered from his miracles that he was the Messiah, whilst he himself said nothing of it, what would not the people have done, and what would not the Scribes and Pharisees have had an opportunity to accuse him of, if he had openly professed himself to have been the Messiah, that king they looked for? But this we have taken notice of already.

82. From thence, going to Capernaum, whither he was followed by a great part of the people, whom he had the day before so miraculously fed, he, upon the occasion of their following him for

the loaves, bids them seek for the meat that endureth to eternal life: and thereupon declares to them his being sent from the Father, and that those who believed in him should be raised to eternal life; but all this very much involved in a mixture of allegorical terms of eating, and of bread; bread of life, which came down from heaven, &c. which is all comprehended and expounded in these short and plain words: 'Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.' The sum of all which discourse is, that he was the Messiah sent from God; and that those who believed him to be so should be raised from the dead, at the last day, to eternal life. These whom he spoke to, were of those who the day before would by force have made him king; and therefore it is no wonder he should speak to them of himself and his kingdom and subjects, in obscure and mystical terms, and such as should offend those who looked for nothing but the grandeur of a temporal kingdom in this world, and the protection and prosperity they had promised themselves under it. The hopes of such a kingdom, now that they had found a man that did miracles, and therefore concluded to be the deliverer they expected, had the day before almost drawn them into an open insurrection, and involved our Saviour in it. This he thought fit to put a stop to, they still following him, it is like, with the same design; and therefore, though he here speaks to them of his kingdom, it was in a way that so plainly balked their expectation, and shocked them, that when they found themselves disappointed of those vain hopes; and that he talked of their eating his flesh, and drinking his

blood, that they might have life; the Jews said, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat? And many, even of his disciples, said, It was an hard saying, who can bear it?' and so were scandalized in him, and forsook him. But what the true meaning of this discourse of our Saviour was, the confession of St. Peter, who understood it better, and answered for the rest of the apostles, shows: when Jesus asked him, 'Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life;' that is, thou teachest us the way to attain eternal life; and, accordingly, 'we believe, and are sure that thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' This was the eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, whereby those who did so had eternal life.

83. Some time after this, he inquires of his disciples, whom the people took him for. They telling him, for John the Baptist, or one of the old prophets risen from the dead; he asked, what they themselves thought. And here again Peter answers in these words, Mark, viii. 29: 'Thou art the Messiah,' Luke, ix. 20; 'The Messiah of God;' and Matt. xvi. 16, 'Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God;' which expressions, we may hence gather, amount to the same thing. Whereupon our Saviour tells Peter, Matt. xvi., 'that this was such a truth as flesh and blood could not reveal to him, but only his Father who was in heaven;' and that this was the foundation on which he was to build his church. By all the parts of which passage it is more than probable, that he had never yet told his apostles in direct words that he was the Messiah, but that they had gathered it

from his life and miracles: for which we may imagine to ourselves this probable reason; because, that if he had familiarly, and in direct terms, talked to his apostles in private that he was the Messiah, the prince, of whose kingdom he preached so much in public everywhere, Judas, whom he knew false and treacherous, would have been readily made use of to testify against him in a matter that would have been really criminal to the Roman governor. This, perhaps, may help to clear to us that seemingly abrupt reply of our Saviour to his apostles, John, vi. 70, when they confessed him to be the Messiah. I will, for the better explaining of it, set down the passage at large. Peter having said, 'We believe, and are sure that thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God; Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is διαβόλος?' This is a reply seeming, at first sight, nothing to the purpose; when yet it is sure all our Saviour's discourses were wise and pertinent. It seems, therefore, to me to carry this sense, to be understood afterwards by the eleven, (as that of destroying the temple, and raising it again in three days was,) when they should reflect on it after his being betrayed by Judas:—You have confessed, and believe the truth concerning me: I am the Messiah, your king: but do not wonder at it, that I have never openly declared it to you; for amongst you twelve, whom I have chosen to be with me, there is one who is an informer, or false accuser, (for so the Greek word signifies, and may possibly here be so translated, rather than devil,) who, if I had owned myself in plain words to have been the Messiah, the king of Israel, would have betrayed me, and informed against me.

84. That he was yet cautious of owning himself to his apostles positively to be the Messiah, appears further from the manner wherein he tells Peter, that he will build his church upon that confession of his, that he was the Messiah. I say unto thee, 'Thou art Cephas,' or a rock; 'and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' Words too doubtful to be laid hold on against him, as a testimony that he professed himself to be the Messiah, especially if we join with them the following words: 'And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and what thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and what thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.' Which, being said personally to Peter, rendered the foregoing words of our Saviour (wherein he declares the fundamental article of his church to be the believing him to be the Messiah) the more obscure and doubtful, and less liable to be made use of against him; but yet such as might afterwards be understood. And for the same reason he yet here again forbids the apostles to say that he was the Messiah.

85. The probability of this, viz., that he had not yet told the apostles themselves plainly that he was the Messiah, is confirmed by what our Saviour says to them, John, xv.: 'Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends;' viz. in the foregoing verse; 'for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.' This was in his last discourse with them after Judas was gone out; wherein he committed to them the great secret, by speaking of the kingdom as his, as

appears from Luke, xxii. 30, and telling them several other particulars about it, whence he had it, what kingdom it was, how to be administered, and what share they were to have in it, &c. From whence it is plain, that till just before he was laid hold on, the very moment he was parting with his apostles, he had kept them as servants in ignorance; but now had discovered himself openly as to his friends.

86. 'From this time,' say the evangelists, 'Jesus began to show to his disciples (that is, his apostles, who are often called disciples) that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders, chief-priests, and Scribes; and be killed, and be raised again the third day.' These, though all marks of the Messiah, yet how little understood by the apostles, or suited to their expectation of the Messiah, appears from Peter's rebuking him for it in the words, Mat. xvi. 22. Peter had twice before owned him to be the Messiah, and yet he cannot here bear that he should suffer, and be put to death, and be raised again; whereby we may perceive, how little yet Jesus had explained to the apostles what personally concerned himself. They had been a good while witnesses of his life and miracles, and thereby being grown into a belief that he was the Messiah, were in some degree prepared to receive the particulars that were to fill up the character, and answer the prophecies concerning him. This, from henceforth, he began to open to them, (though in a way which the Jews could not form an accusation out of,) the time of the accomplishment of all, in his sufferings, death, and resurrection, now drawing on: for this was in the last year

of his life; he being to meet the Jews at Jerusalem but once more at the passover, and then they should have their will upon him, and therefore he might now begin to be a little more open concerning himself; though yet so as to keep himself out of the reach of any accusation that might appear just or weighty to the Roman deputy.

87. After his reprimand to Peter, telling him that he 'savoured not the things of God, but of man, Mark, viii., he calls the people to him, and prepares those who would be his disciples, for suffering; telling them, 'Whoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels:' and then subjoins two great and solemn acts, wherein he should show himself to be the Messiah, the king; 'for the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall render every man according to his works.' This is evidently meant of the glorious appearance of his kingdom, when he shall come to judge the world at the last day; described more at large, Matt. xxv. 'When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. Then shall the King say to them on his right hand,' &c.

88. But what follows in the place above quoted, Matt. xvi. 28: 'Verily, verily, there be some standing here who shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom,'—importing that dominion, which some there should see

him exercise over the nation of the Jews,—was so covered, by being annexed to the preceding verse, 27, (where he spoke of the manifestation and glory of his kingdom at the day of judgment,) that though his plain meaning here, in verse 28, be, that the appearance and visible exercise of his kingly power in his kingdom was so near, that some there should live to see it; yet if the foregoing words had not cast a shadow over these latter, but they had been left plainly to be understood, as they plainly signified, that he should be a king, and that it was so near, that some there should see him in his kingdom, this might have been laid hold on, and made the matter of a plausible and seemingly just accusation against him by the Jews, before Pilate. This seems to be the reason of our Saviour's inverting here the order of the two solemn manifestations to the world of his rule and power; thereby perplexing at present his meaning, and securing himself, as was necessary, from the malice of the Jews, which always lay at catch to entrap him, and accuse him to the Roman governor; and would, no doubt, have been ready to have alleged these words, 'Some here shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom,' against him as criminal, had not their meaning been, by the former verse, perplexed, and the sense at that time rendered unintelligible, and not applicable by any of his auditors to a sense that might have been prejudicial to him before Pontius Pilate: for how well the chief of the Jews were disposed towards him St. Luke tells us, chap. xi.: 'Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him: which may be a reason to sa-

tisfy us of the seemingly doubtful and obscure way of speaking used by our Saviour in other places; his circumstances being such, that without such a prudent carriage and reservedness, he could not have gone through the work which he came to do; nor have performed all the parts of it, in a way correspondent to the descriptions given of the Messiah, and which would be afterwards fully understood to belong to him, when he had left the world.

89. After this, Matt. xvii., he, without saying it in direct words, begins, as it were, to own himself to his apostles to be the Messiah, by assuring them, that as the Scribes, according to the prophecy of Malachi,[1] rightly said, that Elias was to usher in the Messiah; so indeed Elias was already come, though the Jews knew him not, and treated him ill: whereby 'they understood that he spake to them of John the Baptist.' And a little after, he somewhat more plainly intimates that he is the Messiah in these words: 'Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to the Messiah.' This, as I remember, is the first place where our Saviour ever mentioned the name of Messiah; and the first time that he went so far towards the owning, to any of the Jewish nation, himself to be him.

90. In his way to Jerusalem, bidding one follow him who would first bury his father, 'Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.' And, sending out

[1] Chap. iv. 5.

the seventy disciples, he says to them, 'Heal the sick, and say, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.' He had nothing else for these, or for his apostles, or any one, it seems, to preach but the good news of the coming of the kingdom of the Messiah. And if any city would not receive them, he bids them, Go into the streets of the same, and say, 'Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, do we wipe off against you: notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.' This they were to take notice of, as that which they should dearly answer for, viz. that they had not with faith received the good tidings of the kingdom of the Messiah.

91. After this his brethren say unto him, John, vii. 2, 3, 4, (the feast or tabernacles being near,) 'Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples may see the works that thou doest: for there is no man that does any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, show thyself to the world.' Here his brethren, which the next verse tells us 'did not believe him,' seem to upbraid him with the inconsistency of his carriage; as if he designed to be received for the Messiah, and yet was afraid to show himself: to whom he justified his conduct, (mentioned verse 1,) in the following verses, by telling them, 'that the world (meaning the Jews especially) hated him, because he testified of it, that the works thereof are evil; and that his time was not yet fully come,' wherein to quit his reserve, and abandon himself freely to their malice and fury. Therefore, though he 'went up unto

the feast, it was not openly, but as it were in secret, verse 10. And here, coming into the temple about the middle of the feast, he justifies his being sent from God; and that he had not done any thing against the law, in curing the man at the pool of Bethesda on the sabbath-day; which, though done above a year and a half before, they made use of as a pretence to destroy him. But what was the true reason of seeking his life, appears from what we have in this seventh chapter: 'Then said some of them at Jerusalem, Is not this he whom they seek to kill? But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Messiah? Howbeit, we know this man whence he is; but when the Messiah cometh, no man knoweth whence he is. Then cried Jesus in the temple, as he taught, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him, for I am from him, and he hath sent me. Then they sought [an occasion] to take him; but no man lays hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. And many of the people believed on him, and said, When the Messiah cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done? The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and chief priests sent officers to take him. Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go to him that sent me: ye shall seek me, and not find me; and where I am, there you cannot come. Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him.' Here we find, that the great

fault in our Saviour, and the great provocation to the Jews, was, his being taken for the Messiah, and doing such things as made the people 'believe in him;' that is, believe that he was the Messiah. Here also our Saviour declares, in words very easy to be understood, at least after his resurrection, that he was the Messiah: for if he were 'sent from God,' and did his miracles by the Spirit of God, there could be no doubt but he was the Messiah. But yet this declaration was in a way that the Pharisees and priests could not lay hold on to make an accusation of to the disturbance of his ministry, or the seizure of his person, how much soever they desired it: for his time was not yet come. The officers they had sent to apprehend him, charmed with his discourse, returned without laying hands on him; and when the chief priests asked them, 'why they brought him not?' they answered, 'Never man spake like this man.' Whereupon the Pharisees reply, 'Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people, who know not the law, are cursed.' This shows what was meant by 'believing on him;' viz. believing that he was the Messiah: for, say they, have any of the rulers, who are skilled in the law, or of the devout and learned Pharisees, acknowledged him to be the Messiah? For as for those who, in the division among the people concerning him, say, 'that he is the Messiah,' they are ignorant and vile wretches, knowing nothing of the Scripture; and being accursed, are given by God to be deceived by this impostor, and to take him for the Messiah. Therefore, notwithstanding their desire to lay hold on him, he goes on: and 'In the last and great day

of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink: he that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' And thus he here again declares himself to be the Messiah; but in the prophetic style, as we see by the next verse of this chapter, and those places in the Old Testament that these words of our Saviour refer to. In the next chapter, John, viii., all that he says concerning himself, and what they were to believe, tends to this, viz. that he was sent from God his Father, and that, if they did not believe that he was the Messiah, they should die in their sins: but this in a way, as St. John observes, that they did not well understand. But our Saviour himself tells them, 'When ye have lift up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he.'

92. Going from them he cures the man born blind, whom meeting with again, after the Jews had questioned him, and cast him out, 'Jesus said to him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe.'[1] Here we see this man is pronounced a believer, when all that was proposed to him to believe was, that Jesus was the Son of God; which was, as we have already shown, to believe that he was the Messiah. In the next chapter, John, x., he declares the laying down of his life for both Jews and Gentiles; but in a parable which they understood not.

[1] John, ix.

93. As he was going to the feast of the dedication, the Pharisees ask him, 'When the kingdom of God;' that is, of the Messiah, 'should come?' He answers, that it shall not come with pomp and observation, and great concourse; but that it was already begun amongst them. If he had stopped here, the sense had been so plain that they could hardly have mistaken him; or have doubted but that he meant that the Messiah was already come and amongst them; and so might have been prone to infer, that Jesus took upon him to be him. But here, as in the place before taken notice of, subjoining to this future revelation of himself, both in his coming to execute vengeance on the Jews, and in his coming to judgment mixed together, he so involved his sense, that it was not easy to understand him. And therefore the Jews came to him again in the temple, John, x., and said, 'How long dost thou make us doubt? If thou be Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered, I told ye, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believed not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I told you.' The believing here, which he accuses them of not doing, is plainly their not believing him to be the Messiah, as the foregoing words evince; and in the same sense it is evidently meant in the following verses of this chapter.

94. From hence, Jesus going to Barbara, and thence returning into Bethany, upon Lazarus's death, Jesus said to Martha, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet he shall live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die for ever.' So

I understand ἀποθάνῃ εἰς τὸν ἀιῶνα, answerable to ζήσεται εἰς τὸν ἀιῶνα, of the Septuagint, Gen. iii. 22, or John, vi. 51, which we read right in our English translation, 'live for ever;' but whether this saying of our Saviour here can with truth be translated, 'He, that liveth and believeth in me, shall never die,' will be apt to be questioned. But to go on, 'Believest thou this? She said unto him, Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Messiah, the Son of God, which should come into the world.' This she gives as a full answer to our Saviour's demands; this being that faith which whoever had wanted no more to make them believers.

95. We may observe further, in this same story of the raising of Lazarus, what faith it was our Saviour expected, by what he says, verses 41, 42: 'Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me; and I know that thou hearest me always. But because of the people who stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.' And what the consequence of it was, we may see, verse 45: 'Then many of the Jews who came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him:' which belief was, that he was sent from the Father; which, in other words, was, that he was the Messiah. That this is the meaning, in the Evangelists, of the phrase of 'believing on him,' we have a demonstration in the following words, verses 47, 48: 'Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? For this man does many miracles; and if we let him alone, all men will believe on him.' Those who here say, all men would believe on him, were the chief priests and Pharisees, his enemies, who sought his life; and therefore could have no

other sense nor thought of this faith in him, which they spake of, but only the believing him to be the Messiah: and that that was their meaning, the adjoining words show: 'If we let him alone, all the world will believe on him;' that is, believe him to be the Messiah. And the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation. Which reasoning of theirs was thus grounded:—if we stand still, and let the people believe on him, (that is, receive him for the Messiah,) they will thereby take him and set him up for their king, and expect deliverance by him; which will draw the Roman arms upon us, to the destruction of us and our country. The Romans could not be thought to be at all concerned in any other belief whatsoever that the people might have on him. It is therefore plain, that 'believing on him' was, by the writers of the gospel, understood to mean, the 'believing him to be the Messiah.' 'The sanhedrim, therefore, from that day forth consulted to put him to death. Jesus, therefore, walked not yet (for so the word ἔτι signifies; and so I think it ought here to be translated) boldly,' or openfaced 'among the Jews;' that is, of Jerusalem. Ἔτι cannot well here be translated 'no more,' because within a very short time after he appeared openly, at the passover, and by his miracles and speech declared himself more freely than ever he had done; and all the week before his passion taught daily in the temple.[1] The meaning of this place seems therefore to be this: that his time being not yet come, he durst not show himself openly and confidently before the Scribes and Pharisees, and those of the sanhedrim at Jerusalem, who were full of malice

[1] Matt. xx. 17; Mark, x. 32; Luke, xviii. 31, &c.

against him, and resolved his death: 'but went thence into a country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there continued with his disciples, to keep himself out of the way till the passover, which was nigh at hand.' In his return thither, he takes the twelve aside, and tells them beforehand what should happen to him at Jerusalem, whither they were now going; and that all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man should be accomplished; that he should be betrayed to the chief priests and Scribes; and that they should condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles; that he should be mocked, and spit on, and scourged, and put to death; and the third day he should rise again. But St. Luke tells us, that the apostles 'understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them; neither knew they the things which were spoken.' They believed him to be the Son of God, the Messiah sent from the Father; but their notion of the Messiah was the same with the rest of the Jews; that he should be a temporal prince and deliverer. Accordingly we see, Mark, x., that even in this their last journey with him to Jerusalem, two of them, James and John, coming to him, and falling at his feet, said, 'Grant unto us, that we may sit, one on thy right hand and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory;' or, as St. Matthew has it, chap. xx., 'in thy kingdom.' That which distinguished them from the unbelieving Jews was, that they believed Jesus to be the very Messiah, and so received him as their king and Lord.

96. And now the hour being come that the Son

of man should be glorified, he, without his usual reserve, makes his public entry into 'Jerusalem, riding on a young ass: as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion, behold thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.' But 'these things,' saith St. John, 'his disciples understood not at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.' Though the apostles believed him to be the Messiah, yet there were many occurrences of his life which they understood not (at the time when they happened) to be foretold of the Messiah; which after his ascension they found exactly to quadrate. Thus, according to what was foretold of him, he rode into the city, 'all the people crying, Hosanna, blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord.' This was so open a declaration of his being the Messiah, that 'some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.' But he was so far now from stopping them, or disowning this their acknowledgment of his being the Messiah, that he 'said unto them, I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.' And again, upon the like occasion of their crying, 'Hosanna, to the Son of David,' in the temple, when 'the chief priests and Scribes were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what they say? Jesus said unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?' And now, 'he cures the blind and the lame openly in the temple. And when the chief priests and Scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the chil-

dren crying in the temple, Hosanna, they were enraged.' One would not think, that after the multitude of miracles that our Saviour had now been doing for above three years together, that the curing the lame and blind should so much move them. But we must remember that though his ministry had abounded with miracles, yet the most of them had been done about Galilee, and in parts remote from Jerusalem. There is but one left upon record hitherto done in that city; and that had so ill a reception, that they sought his life for it; as we may read, John, v. 16. And therefore we hear not of his being at the next passover, because he was there only privately, as an ordinary Jew: the reason whereof we may read, John, vii. 1: 'After these things, Jesus walked in Galilee, for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.

97. Hence we may guess the reason why St. John omitted the mention of his being at Jerusalem at the third passover after his baptism; probably because he did nothing memorable there. Indeed, when he was at the feast of tabernacles, immediately preceding this last passover, he cured the man born blind: but it appears not to have been done in Jerusalem itself, but in the way as he retired to the Mount of Olives; for there seems to have been nobody by when he did it, but his apostles. Compare verse 2, with verse 8, 10, of St. John, ix. This, at least, is remarkable, that neither the cure of this blind man, nor that of the other infirm man, at the passover above a twelvemonth before at Jerusalem, was done in the sight of the Scribes, Pharisees, chief priests, or rulers.

Nor was it without reason, that in the former part of his ministry he was cautious of showing himself to them to be the Messiah. But now that he was come to the last scene of his life, and that the passover was come, the appointed time wherein he was to complete the work he came for, in his death and resurrection, he does many things in Jerusalem itself, before the face of the Scribes, Pharisees, and whole body of the Jewish nation, to manifest himself to be the Messiah. And, as St. Luke says, 'He taught daily in the temple; but the chief priests, and the Scribes, and the chief of the people, sought to destroy him; and could not find what they might do, for all the people were very attentive to hear him.' What he taught we are not left to guess, by what we have found him constantly preaching elsewhere; but St. Luke tells us, chap. xx., 'He taught in the temple, and evangelized;' or, as we translate it, 'preached the gospel:' which, as we have showed, was the making known to them the good news of the kingdom of the Messiah. And this we shall find he did, in what now remains of his history.

98. In the first discourse, of his, which we find upon record after this, John, xii. 20, &c. he foretells his crucifixion, and the belief of all sorts, both Jews and Gentiles, on him after that. Whereupon the people say to him, 'We have heard, out of the law, that the Messiah abideth for ever; and how sayest thou, that the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?' In his answer he plainly designs himself, under the name of Light; which was what he had declared himself to them to be, the last time that they had seen him

in Jerusalem. For then, at the feast of tabernacles, but six months before, he tells them in the very place where he now is, viz. in the temple, 'I am the Light of the world; whosoever follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life:' as we may read, John, viii. 12, and ix. 5, he says, 'As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.' But neither here, nor anywhere else, does he, even in these four or five last days of his life, (though he knew his hour was come, and was prepared for his death, and scrupled not to manifest himself to the rulers of the Jews to be the Messiah, by doing miracles before them in the temple,) ever once in direct words own himself to the Jews to be the Messiah; though by miracles, and other ways, he did everywhere make it known to them, so that it might be understood. This could not be without some reason; and the preservation of his life, which he came now to Jerusalem on purpose to lay down, could not be it. What other reason could it then be, but the same which had made him use caution in the former part of his ministry, so to conduct himself that he might do the work which he came for, and in all parts answer the character given of the Messiah in the law and the prophets? He had fulfilled the time of his ministry, and now taught and did miracles openly in the temple, before the rulers and the people, not fearing to be seized: but he would not be seized for any thing that might make him a criminal to the government; and therefore he avoided giving those, who in the division that was about him inclined towards him, occasion of tumult for his sake; or to the Jews, his enemies, matter of just accusation against him out of his

own mouth, by professing himself to be the Messiah, the king of Israel, in direct words. It was enough, that by words and deeds he declared it so to them, that they could not but understand him; which it is plain they did, Luke, xx. 16, 19; Matt. xxi. 45. But yet neither his actions, which were only doing of good, nor words, which were mystical and parabolical, (as we may see, Matt. xxi. and xxii., and the parallel places of Matthew and Luke,) nor any of his ways of making himself known to be the Messiah, could be brought in testimony, or urged against him, as opposite or dangerous to the government. This preserved him from being condemned as a malefactor, and procured him a testimony from the Roman governor, his judge, that he was an innocent man, sacrificed to the envy of the Jewish nation. So that he avoided saying that he was the Messiah, that to those who could call to mind his life and death after his resurrection, he might the more clearly appear to be so. It is further to be remarked, that though he often appeals to the testimony of his miracles who he is, yet he never tells the Jews that he was born at Bethlehem, to remove the prejudice that lay against him, whilst he passed for a Galilean, and which was urged as a proof that he was not the Messiah, John, vii. 41, 42. The healing of the sick, and doing of good miraculously, could be no crime in him, nor accusation against him: but the naming of Bethlehem for his birth-place, might have wrought as much upon the mind of Pilate as it did on Herod's; and have raised a suspicion in Pilate as prejudicial to our Saviour's innocence as Herod's was to the children born there. His pretending to be born at Bethlehem, as it was liable

to be explained by the Jews, could not have failed to have met with a sinister interpretation in the Roman governor, and have rendered Jesus suspected of some criminal design against the government. And hence we see, that when Pilate asked him, 'Whence art thou? Jesus gave him no answer.'

99. Whether our Saviour had not an eye to this straitness, this narrow room that was left to his conduct, between the new converts and the captious Jews, when he says, 'I have a baptism to be baptized with; and πῶς συνέχομαι, how am I straitened till it be accomplished,' I leave to be considered. 'I am come to send fire on the earth,' says our Saviour; 'and what if it be already kindled?' that is, there begin already to be divisions about me,[1] and I have not the freedom, the latitude, to declare myself openly to be the Messiah; though I am he, that must not be spoken out till after my death. My way to my throne is closely hedged in on every side, and much straitened, within which I must keep, till it bring me to my cross, in its due time and manner, so that it do not cut short the time, nor cross the end of my ministry.

100. And therefore to keep up this inoffensive character, and not to let it come within the reach of accident or calumny, he withdrew with his apostles out of the town every evening, and kept himself retired out of the way. 'And in the daytime he was teaching in the temple, and every night he

[1] Vide John, vii. 12, 43, and ix. 16, and x. 19.

went out, and abode in the mount that is called the Mount of Olives;' that he might avoid all concourse to him in the night, and give no occasion of disturbance or suspicion of himself in that great conflux of the whole nation of the Jews, now assembled in Jerusalem at the passover.

101. But to return to his preaching in the temple. He bids them 'to believe in the light whilst they have it:'[1] and he tells them, 'I am the light come into the world, that every one who believes in me should not remain in darkness.' Which believing in him, was the believing him to be the Messiah, as I have elsewhere showed. The next day, he rebukes them for not having believed John the Baptist, who had testified that he was the Messiah: and then, in a parable, declares himself to be the Son of God, whom they should destroy; and that for it God would take away the kingdom of the Messiah from them, and give it to the Gentiles.[2] That they understood him thus is plain from Luke, xx. 16: 'And when they heard it, they said, God forbid;' and verse 19, 'For they knew that he had spoken this parable against them.'

102. Much to the same purpose was his next parable, concerning the kingdom of heaven, Matt. xxii., that the Jews not accepting of the kingdom of the Messiah, to whom it was first offered, others should be brought in. The Scribes and Pharisees and chief priests, not able to bear the declaration he made of himself to be the Messiah, (by his discourses and miracles before them, ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν,

[1] John, xii. 36. [2] Matt. xx[i].

John, xii. 37, which he had never done before,) impatient of his preaching and miracles, and being not able otherwise to stop the increase of his followers, (for, 'said the Pharisees among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him.' So that the 'chief priests, and the Scribes, and the chief of the people,) sought to destroy him,' the first day of his entrance into Jerusalem. The next day, again they were intent upon the same thing. And he taught in the temple; 'and the Scribes and the chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him; for they feared him, because all the people were astonished at his doctrine.'

103. The next day but one, upon his telling them the kingdom of the Messiah should be taken from them, 'the chief priests and Scribes sought to lay hands on him the same hour; and they feared the people,' Luke xx. If they had so great a desire to lay hold on him, why did they not? They were the chief priests and the rulers, the men of power. The reason St. Luke plainly tells us in the next verse: 'And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him into the power and authority of the governor.' They wanted matter of accusation against him to the power they were under: that they watched for, and that they would have been glad of, if they could have entangled him in his talk, as St. Matthew expresses it.[1] If they could have laid hold on any word that had dropped from him, that might

[1] Chap. xxii.

have rendered him guilty or suspected to the Roman governor, that would have served their turn, to have laid hold upon him, with hopes to destroy him: for their power not answering their malice, they could not put him to death by their own authority, without the permission and assistance of the governor, as they confess, John, xviii. 31: 'It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.' This made them so earnest for a declaration in direct words from his own mouth, that he was the Messiah. It was not that they would more have believed in him for such a declaration of himself, than they did for his miracles, or other ways of making himself known, which it appears they understood well enough; but they wanted plain direct words, such as might support an accusation, and be of weight before an heathen judge. This was the reason why they pressed him to speak out: 'Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou be the Messiah, tell us plainly,'[1] παῤῥησία; that is, in direct words: for that St. John uses it in that sense, we may see chap. xi. 11—14: 'Jesus saith to them, Lazarus sleepeth.' His disciples said, 'If he sleeps, he shall do well. Howbeit, Jesus spake of his death; but they thought he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus to them plainly, παῤῥησία, Lazarus is dead.' Here we see what is meant by παῤῥησία, plain direct words, such as express the thing without a figure; and so they would have had Jesus pronounced himself to be the Messiah. And the same thing they press again, Matt. xvi. the high-priest adjuring him by the living God, to tell them whether he were the

Messiah, the Son of God, as we shall have occasion to take notice by-and-by.

104. This we may observe in the whole management of their design against his life. It turned upon this; that they wanted and wished for a declaration from him, in direct words, that he was the Messiah; something from his own mouth, that might offend the Roman power, and render him criminal to Pilate. 'They asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly; neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly. Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Cæsar, or no?' By this captious question they hoped to catch him, which way soever he answered; for if he had said, they ought to pay tribute to Cæsar, it would be plain he allowed their subjection to the Romans, and so in effect disowned himself to be their king and deliverer; whereby he would have contradicted what his carriage and doctrine seemed to aim at, the opinion that was spread amongst the people, that he was the Messiah. This would have quashed the hopes, and destroyed the faith of those who believed on him, and have turned the ears and hearts of the people from him. If, on the other side, he answered *No*, it is not lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar, they had had out of his own mouth wherewithal to condemn him before Pontius Pilate. But St. Luke tells us, 'He perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me?' that is, why do ye lay snares for me? 'Ye hypocrites, show me the tribute-money.' So it is, Matt. xxii. 19. 'Whose image and inscription has it? They said, Cæsar's. He said unto them,

Render, therefore, to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.' By the wisdom and caution of which unexpected answer, he defeated their whole design. 'And they could not take hold of his words before the people; and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace,' Luke, xx. 26; 'and leaving him, they departed,' Matt. xxii. 22.

105. He having, by this reply, (and what he answered to the Sadducees concerning the resurrection, and to the lawyer about the first commandment, Mark, xii.,) answered so little to their satisfaction or advantage, they durst ask him no more questions any of them. And now their mouths being stopped, he himself begins to question them about the Messiah, asking the Pharisees, Matt. xxii. 'What think ye of the Messiah, whose Son is he? They say unto him the Son of David:' wherein, though they answered right, yet he shows them, in the following words, that however they pretended to be studiers and teachers of the law, yet they understood not clearly the Scriptures concerning the Messiah; and thereupon he sharply rebukes their hypocrisy, vanity, pride, malice, covetousness, and ignorance; and particularly tells them, 'Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, nor suffer ye them that are entering, to go in.' Whereby he plainly declares to them, that the Messiah was come, and his kingdom began; but that they refused to believe in him themselves, and did all they could to hinder others from believing in him, as is manifest throughout the New Testament; the history whereof sufficiently explains what is

meant here by the 'kingdom of heaven,' which the Scribes and Pharisees would neither go into themselves, nor suffer others to enter into. And they could not choose but understand him, though he named not himself in the case.

106. Provoked anew by his rebukes, they get presently to council: 'Then assembled together the chief priests, and the Scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high-priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast-day, lest there be an uproar among the people. For they feared the people,' says, St. Luke, chap. xxii. Having in the night got Jesus into their hands, by the treachery of Judas, they presently led him away, bound, to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high-priest, who probably having examined him, and getting nothing out of him for his purpose, sends him away to Caiaphas, where the chief priests, the Scribes, and the elders were assembled, John, xviii. 19, 20: 'The high-priest then asked Jesus of his disciples and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.' A proof that he had not in private to his disciples declared himself in express words to be the Messiah, the Prince. But he goes on. 'Why askest thou me?' Ask Judas, who has been always with me. 'Ask them who heard me what I have said unto them; behold, they know what I said.' Our Saviour, we see, here warily declines, for the reasons above mentioned, all discourse of his doc-

trine. The sanhedrim, Matt. xxvi., 'sought false witness against him;' but when they found none that were sufficient, or came up to the point they desired, which was to have something against him to take away his life; (for so I think the words ἴσαι and ἴση mean, Mark, xiv. 56, 59;) they try again what they can get out of him himself, concerning his being the Messiah; which if he owned in express words, they thought they should have enough against him at the tribunal of the Roman governor, to make him *læsæ majestatis reum*, and so to take away his life. They therefore say to him, Luke, xxii. 67: 'If thou be the Messiah, tell us:' nay, as St. Matthew hath it, the high-priest adjures him by the living God to tell them whether he were the Messiah. To which our Saviour replies: 'If I tell you, ye will not believe; and if I ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go.' If I tell you, and prove to you, by the testimony given of me from heaven, and by the works that I have done among you, you will not believe in me, that I am the Messiah: or, if I should ask you where the Messiah is to be born, and what state he should come in, how he should appear, and other things that you think in me not reconcilable with the Messiah; you will not answer me, and let me go, as one that has no pretence to be the Messiah, and you are not afraid should be received for such. But yet I tell you, 'hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God,' verse 70. Then said they all, 'Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am.' By which discourse with them, related at large here by St. Luke, it is plain, that the answer of our Saviour, set down by

St. Matthew, chap. xxvi. 64, in these words, 'Thou hast said;' and by St. Mark, chap. xvi. 62, in these, 'I am;' is an answer only to this question, 'Art thou then the Son of God?' and not to that other, 'Art thou the Messiah?' which preceded, and he had answered to before; though Matthew and Mark, contracting the story, set them down together, as if making but one question, omitting all the intervening discourse; whereas it is plain, out of St. Luke, that they were two distinct questions, to which Jesus gave two distinct answers: in the first whereof he, according to his usual caution, declined saying in plain express words that he was the Messiah; though in the latter he owned himself to be the Son of God: which, though they, being Jews, understood to signify the Messiah, yet he knew could be no legal or weighty accusation against him before a heathen; and so it proved: for upon his answering to their question, 'Art thou then the Son of God? Ye say that I am;' they cry out, 'What need we any further witnesses? For we ourselves have heard out of his own mouth:' and so thinking they had enough against him, they hurry him away to Pilate. Pilate asking them, 'What accusation bring you against this man? they answered and said, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.' Then said Pilate unto them, 'Take ye him, and judge him according to your law.'[1] But this would not serve their turn, who aimed at his life, and would be satisfied with nothing else. The Jews, therefore, said unto him, 'It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.' And this was

[1] John, xviii.

also, 'that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which he spake, signifying what death he should die.' Pursuing, therefore, their design, of making him appear to Pontius Pilate guilty of treason against Cæsar, 'they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar; saying, that he himself is the Messiah, the king:' all which were inferences of theirs from his saying, he was the 'Son of God;' which Pontius Pilate finding, (for it is consonant that he examined them to the precise words he had said,) their accusation had no weight with him. However, the name of king being suggested against Jesus, he thought himself concerned to search it to the bottom. 'Then Pilate entered again into the judgment-hall, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief-priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews? But my kingdom is not from hence. Pilate, therefore, said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king: for this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth: every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.'

107. In this dialogue between our Saviour and Pilate we may observe, 1, That being asked, whether he were the king of the Jews, he answers so, that

though he deny it not, yet he avoided giving the least umbrage, that he had any design upon the government; for, though he allows himself to be a king, yet, to obviate any suspicion, he tells Pilate, 'his kingdom is not of this world;' and evidences it by this, that if he had pretended to any title to that country, his followers, which were not a few, and were forward enough to believe him their king, would have fought for him, if he had had a mind to set himself up by force, or his kingdom were so to be erected. 'But my kingdom,' says he, 'is not from hence;' is not of this fashion, or of this place. 2. Pilate, being by his words and circumstances satisfied that he laid no claim to his province, or meant any disturbance of the government, was yet a little surprised to hear a man, in that poor garb, without retinue, or so much as a servant or a friend, own himself to be a king; and therefore asks him, with some kind of wonder, 'Art thou a king, then?' 3. That our Saviour declares, that his great business into the world was, to testify and make good this great truth, that he was a king; that is, in other words, that he was the Messiah. 4. That whoever were followers of the truth, and got into the way of truth and happiness, received this doctrine concerning him, viz., that he was Messiah, their king.

108. Pilate being thus satisfied that he neither meant, nor could there arise any harm from his pretence, whatever it was, to be a king, tells the Jews, 'I find no fault in this man:' but the Jews were the more fierce, saying, 'He stirreth up the people to sedition, by his preaching through all Jewry, begining from Galilee to this place:' and

then Pilate, learning that he was of Galilee, Herod's jurisdiction, sent him to Herod; to whom also 'the chief priests and Scribes vehemently accused him.' Herod finding all their accusations either false or frivolous, thought our Saviour a bare object of contempt; and so turning him only into ridicule, sent him back to Pilate; who calling unto him the chief priests, and the rulers, and the people, said unto them, 'Ye have brought this man unto me as one that perverteth the people; and behold, I have examined him before you, have found no fault in this man, touching these things whereof ye accuse him; no, nor yet Herod; for I sent you to him; and so nothing worthy of death is done by him:' and therefore he would have released him; 'for he knew the chief priests had delivered him through envy.' And when they demanded Barabbas to be released; but as for Jesus, cried, Crucify him, 'Pilate said unto them the third time, Why? What evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.'

109. We may observe in all this whole prosecution of the Jews, that they would fain have got it out of Jesus's own mouth, in express words, that he was the Messiah; which not being able to do with all their art and endeavour, all the rest that they could allege against him not amounting to a proof before Pilate, that he claimed to be king of the Jews, or that he had caused or done any thing towards a mutiny or insurrection among the people, (for upon these two, as we see, their whole charge turned,) Pilate again and again pronounced him innocent; for so he did a fourth and a fifth

time, bringing him out to them after he had whipped him. And after all, 'When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just man; see you to it.' Which gives us a clear reason of the cautious and wary conduct of our Saviour, in not declaring himself, in the whole course of his ministry, so much as to his disciples, much less to the multitude or the rulers of the Jews, in express words, to be the Messiah, the king; and why he kept himself always in prophetical or parabolical terms, (he and his disciples preaching only the kingdom of God, that is, of the Messiah, to be come,) and left to his miracles to declare who he was; though this was the truth which he came into the world, as he says himself, to testify, and which his disciples were to believe.

110. When Pilate, satisfied of his innocence, would have released him; and the Jews persisted to cry out, 'Crucify him, crucify him, Pilate says to them, take ye him yourselves, and crucify him; for I do not find any fault in him.' The Jews then, since they could not make him a state-criminal, by alleging his saying that he was the Son of God; say, by their law, it was a capital crime. The Jews answered to Pilate, 'We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God;' that is, because, by saying he is the Son of God, he has made himself the Messiah, the prophet which was to come: for we find no other law but that against false prophets, Deut. xviii. 20, whereby 'making himself the Son

of God' deserved death. After this Pilate was the more desirous to release him, 'But the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar.' Here we see the stress of their charge against Jesus, whereby they hoped to take away his life, viz. that he 'made himself king.' We see also upon what they grounded this accusation, viz., because he had owned himself to be 'the Son of God:' for he had, in their hearing, never made or professed himself to be a king. We see here likewise the reason why they were so desirous to draw, from his own mouth, a confession, in express words, that he was the Messiah, viz., that they might have what might be a clear proof that he did so. And last of all, we see the reason why, though in expressions which they understood, he owned himself to them to be the Messiah, yet he avoided declaring it to them in such words as might look criminal at Pilate's tribunal. He owned himself to be the Messiah plainly to the understanding of the Jews; but in ways that could not, to the understanding of Pilate, make it appear that he had laid claim to the kingdom of Judea, or went about to make himself king of that country. But whether his saying that he was 'the Son of God,' was criminal by their law, that Pilate troubled not himself about.

111. He that considers what Tacitus, Suetonius, Seneca, de Benef. lib. iii. c. 26, say of Tiberius and his reign, will find how necessary it was for our Saviour, if he would not die as a criminal and a traitor, to take great heed to his words and actions, that he did or said not any thing that might be

offensive, or give the least umbrage to the Roman government. It behoved an innocent man, who was taken notice of for something extraordinary in him, to be very wary, under a jealous and cruel prince, who encouraged informations, and filled his reign with executions for treason; under whom words spoken innocently, or in jest, if they could be misconstrued, were made treason, and prosecuted with a rigour that made it always the same thing to be accused and condemned. And therefore we see, that when the Jews told Pilate, that he should not be a friend to Cæsar if he let Jesus go, (for that whoever made himself king, was a rebel against Cæsar,) he asks them no more whether they would take Barabbas, and spare Jesus, but (though against his conscience) gives him up to death, to secure his own head.

112. One thing more there is, that gives us light into this wise[1] and necessarily cautious management of himself, which manifestly agrees with it, and makes a part of it; and that is, the choice of his apostles, exactly suited to the design and foresight of the necessity of keeping the declaration of

[1] On questions of this kind there is always some inconsistency in the language of the best of men. Considering Christ to be the Messiah it is exceedingly unnecessary, to say no more of it, to speak of the wisdom of his conduct; for, who can doubt it? To be the Christ, the Sent, the Anointed of God, implies wisdom, and goodness, and every excellent attribute; and we seem as if desirous to prove to ourselves that he was the Christ, when we praise him as we would a Socrates, a Plato, or a Milton. There is a want of wisdom in attempting to assign the *why* and the *wherefore* in speaking of divine things. Whatever God does, we may, for that very reason, be satisfied is wisest and best; but why it should be so, we neither know nor can know. —Ed.

the kingdom of the Messiah, which was now expected, within certain general terms during his ministry: it was not fit to open himself too plainly or forwardly to the heady Jews, that he himself was the Messiah; that was to be left to be found out by the observation of those who would attend to the purity of his life, the testimony of his miracles, and the conformity of all with the predictions concerning him; by these marks, those he lived amongst were to find it out, without an express promulgation that he was the Messiah, till after his death: His kingdom was to be opened to them by degrees, as well to prepare them to receive it, as to enable him to be long enough amongst them, to perform what was the work of the Messiah to be done, and fulfil all those several parts of what was foretold of him in the Old Testament, and we see applied to him in the New.

113. The Jews had no other thoughts of their Messiah, but of a mighty temporal prince, that should raise their nation into a higher degree of power, dominion, and prosperity than ever it had enjoyed. They were filled with the expectation of a glorious earthly kingdom. It was not therefore for a poor man, the son of a carpenter, and (as they thought) born in Galilee, to pretend to it. None of the Jews, no not his disciples, could have borne this, if he had expressly avowed this at first, and began his preaching, and the opening of his kingdom this way; especially if he had added to it, that in a year or two he should die an ignominious death upon the cross. They are therefore prepared for the truth by degrees. First, John the Baptist tells them, 'The kingdom of God (a name

by which the Jews called the kingdom of the Messiah) is at hand.' Then our Saviour comes, and he tells them of the kingdom of God, sometimes that it is at hand, and upon some occasions, that it is come; but says, in his public preaching, little or nothing of himself. Then come the apostles and evangelists after his death, and they in express words teach what his birth, life, and doctrine had done before, and had prepared the well-disposed to receive; viz. that Jesus is the Messiah.

114. To this design and method of publishing the gospel, was the choice of the apostles exactly adjusted; a company of poor, ignorant, illiterate men, who, as Christ himself tells us, were not of the wise and prudent men of the world; they were in that respect but mere children. These, convinced by the miracles they saw him daily do, and the unblamable life he led, might be disposed to believe him to be the Messiah; and though they with others expected a temporal kingdom on earth, might yet rest satisfied in the truth of their master (who had honoured them with being near his person) that it would come, without being too inquisitive after the time, manner, or seat of his kingdom; as men of letters,[1] more studied in their rabbins,

[1] Had God disposed things differently, and made choice of men of letters, I hope our piety would have taught us sufficient meekness to discover equal wisdom in the selection. For what, after all, is the knowledge of the most profound philosopher, when he comes to consider the counsels and actions of the Almighty? In these attempts to explain the motives of our Saviour, further than they appear in Scripture,—which, however, is common to Locke with the most distinguished divines,—I

or men of business, more versed in the world, would have been forward to have been. Men great or wise in knowledge or ways of the world, would hardly have been kept from prying more narrowly into his design and conduct, or from questioning him about the ways and measures he would take for ascending the throne; and what means were to be used towards it, and when they should in earnest set about it. Abler men, of higher births or thoughts,[1] would hardly have been hindered from whispering, at least to their friends and relations, that their Master was the Messiah; and that though he concealed himself to a fit opportunity, and till things were ripe for it, yet they should ere long see him break out of his obscurity, cast off the cloud, and declare himself, as he was, king of Israel. But the ignorance and lowness of these poor men made them of another temper. They went along in an implicit trust on him, punctually keeping to his commands, and not ex-

discover a want of that humility which should be the guiding spirit in all religious investigations.—Ed.

[1] This appears but very poor reasoning to me. Men of high thoughts, which not always accompany high birth, would doubtless have learned of their Divine Master the necessity of obedience. If low thoughts mean, as I suppose they do, confused, obscure, and incorrect thoughts, "high thoughts" must be such as approach nearer to truth and virtue; and the possessor of such thoughts would be so much the further from any unwise action. But the truth appears to be, that our Saviour chose his apostles because their thoughts were high; that is, pure, and nearer heaven, than those occupying the heads of ordinary men of business, or even of statesmen. Like the patriarch of old, they were, perhaps, accustomed to meditate in the fields at eventide; and He who searches all hearts knew to what heights their contemplations soared. Poor they were—but the absence of gold and silver makes a man neither high nor low; but the thoughts upon which his soul habitually feeds.—Ed.

ceeding his commission. When he sent them to preach the gospel, he bid them preach the 'kingdom of God' to be at hand; and that they did, without being more particular than he had ordered, or mixing their own prudence with his commands, to promote the kingdom of the Messiah. They preached it without giving out, or so much as intimating that their master was he; which men of another condition, and an higher education, would scarce have forborne to have done. When he asked them who they thought him to be, and Peter answered, 'The Messiah, the Son of God,' he plainly shows, by the following words, that he himself had not told them so; and at the same time, forbids them to tell this their opinion of him to any body. How obedient they were to him in this, we may not only conclude from the silence of the evangelists concerning any such thing published by them anywhere before his death, but from the exact obedience three of them paid to a like command of his. He takes Peter, James, and John into a mountain, and there Moses and Elias coming to him, he is transfigured before them: he charges them, saying, 'See that ye tell no man what ye have seen, till the Son of man shall be risen from the dead.' And St. Luke tells us, what punctual observers they were of his orders in this case: 'They kept it close, and told no man, in those days, any of those things which they had seen.'[1]

115. Whether twelve other men, of quicker parts, and of a station or breeding which might have given them any opinion of themselves or their

[1] Luke, ix. 36.

own abilities, would have been so easily kept from meddling beyond just what was prescribed them, in a matter they had so much interest in; and have said nothing of what they might in human prudence have thought would have contributed to their master's reputation, and made way for his advancement to his kingdom, I leave to be considered. And it may suggest matter of meditation, whether St. Paul was not, for this reason, by his learning, parts, and warmer temper, better fitted for an apostle after, than during our Saviour's ministry; and therefore, though a chosen vessel, was not by the divine wisdom called till after Christ's resurrection. I offer this only as a subject of magnifying the admirable contrivance of the divine wisdom, in the whole work of our redemption, as far as we are able to trace it by the footsteps which God hath made visible to human reason. For though it be as easy to omnipotent Power to do all things by an immediate overruling will, and so to make any instruments work, even contrary to their natures, in subserviency to his ends; yet his wisdom is not usually at the expense of miracles, (if I may so say,) but only in cases that require them, for the evidencing of some revelation or mission to be from him. He does constantly (unless where the confirmation of some truth requires it otherwise) bring about his purposes by means operating according to their natures. If it were not so, the course and evidence of things would be confounded; miracles would lose their name and force, and there could be no distinction between natural and supernatural.

116. There had been no room left to see and ad-

mire the wisdom, as well as innocence, of our Saviour, if he had rashly everywhere exposed himself to the fury of the Jews, and had always been preserved by a miraculous suspension of their malice, or a miraculous rescuing him out of their hands. It was enough for him once to escape from the men of Nazareth, who were going to throw him down a precipice, for him never to preach to them again. Our Saviour had multitudes that followed him for the loaves, who barely seeing the miracles that he did, would have made him king. If to the miracles he did, he had openly added, in express words, that he was the Messiah, and the king they expected to deliver them, he would have had more followers, and warmer in the cause, and readier to set him up at the head of a tumult. These, indeed, God, by a miraculous influence, might have hindered from any such attempt; but then posterity could not have believed that the nation of the Jews did at that time expect the Messiah, their king and deliverer, or that Jesus, who declared himself to be that king deliverer, showed any miracles amongst them, to convince them of it; or did any thing worthy to make him be credited or received. If he had gone about preaching to the multitude which he drew after him, that he was the 'Messiah, the king of Israel, and this had been evidenced to Pilate, God could indeed, by a supernatural influence upon his mind, have made Pilate pronounce him innocent, and not condemn him as a malefactor, who had openly, for three years together, preached sedition to the people, and endeavoured to persuade them that he was the 'Messiah, their king,' of the blood royal of David come to deliver them. But then I ask, whether posterity would not either have suspected the story, or that some art had been used to

gain that testimony from Pilate? Because he could not (for nothing) have been so favourable to Jesus, as to be willing to release so turbulent and seditious a man, to declare him innocent, and to cast the blame and guilt of his death, as unjust, upon the envy of the Jews.

117. But now the malice of the chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees; the headiness of the mob, animated with hopes, and raised with miracles; Judas's treachery, and Pilate's care of his government, and of the peace of his province, all working naturally as they should; Jesus, by the admirable wariness of his carriage, and an extraordinary wisdom visible in his whole conduct, weathers all these difficulties, does the work he comes for, uninterruptedly goes about preaching his full appointed time, sufficiently manifests himself to be the Messiah in all the particulars the Scriptures had foretold of him; and when his hour is come, suffers death; but is acknowledged, both by Judas that betrayed and Pilate that condemned him, to die innocent. For, to use his own words, 'Thus it is written, and thus it behoved the Messiah to suffer.' And of his whole conduct we have a reason and clear resolution in those words to St. Peter, Matt. xxvi. 'Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be?'

118. Having this clue to guide us, let us now observe how our Saviour's preaching and conduct comported with it in the last scene of his life. How cautious he had been in the former part of his minis-

try, we have already observed. We never find him to use the name of the Messiah but once, till he now came to Jerusalem, this last passover. Before this, his preaching and miracles were less at Jerusalem (where he used to make but very short stays) than anywhere else; but now he comes six days before the feast, and is every day in the temple teaching; and there publicly heals the blind and the lame, in the presence of the Scribes, Pharisees, and chief priests. The time of his ministry drawing to an end, and his hour coming, he cared not how much the chief priests, elders, rulers, and the sanhedrim were provoked against him by his doctrine and miracles; he was as open and bold in his preaching, and doing the works of the Messiah now, at Jerusalem, and in the sight of the rulers and of all the people, as he had been before cautious and reserved there, and careful to be little taken notice of in that place, and not to come in their way more than needs. All that he now took care of was, not what they should think of him, or design against him, (for he knew they would seize him,) but to say or do nothing that might be a just matter of accusation against him, or render him criminal to the governor. But as for the grandees of the Jewish nation, he spares them not, but sharply now reprehends their miscarriages publicly in the temple, where he calls them, more than once, hypocrites, as is to be seen Matt. xxiii.; and concludes all with no softer a compellation than 'serpents' and 'generation of vipers.'

119. After this severe reproof of the Scribes and Pharisees, being retired with his disciples into the Mount of Olives, over against the temple, and there

foretelling the destruction of it, his disciples ask him, Matt. xxiv. 'When it should be, and what should be the signs of his coming?' He says to them, 'Take heed that no man deceive you: for many shall come in my name;' that is, taking on them the name and dignity of the Messiah, which is only mine; saying, 'I am the Messiah, and shall deceive many.' But be not you by them misled, nor by persecution driven away from this fundamental truth—that I am the Messiah; 'for many shall be scandalized,' and apostatize, 'but he that endures to the end, the same shall be saved: and this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world; that is, the good news of me, the Messiah, and my kingdom, shall be spread through the world. This was the great and only point of belief they were warned to stick to; and this is inculcated again, ver. 23—26, and Mark xiii. 21—23, with this emphatical application to them in both these evangelists: 'Behold, I have told you beforehand;' remember ye are forewarned.

120. This was in his answer to the apostles' inquiry concerning his 'coming, and the end of the world;' for so we translate *τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος*; we must understand the disciples here to put their question according to the notion and way of speaking of the Jews. For they had two worlds, as we translate it, *ὁ νῦν αἰὼν καὶ ὁ μέλλων αἰών*; the 'present world,' and the 'world to come.' The kingdom of God, as they called it, or the time of the Messiah, they called *ὁ μέλλων αἰών*, 'the world to come,' which they believed was to put an end to 'this world:' and that then the just should be raised from the dead to enjoy in

that new world, a happy eternity with those of the Jewish nation who should be then living.

121. These two things, viz. the visible and powerful appearance of his kingdom, and the end of the world, being confounded in the apostles' question, our Saviour does not separate them, nor distinctly reply to them apart; but leaving the inquirers in the common opinion, answers at once concerning his coming to take vengeance of the Jewish nation, and put an end to their church, worship, and commonwealth; which was their ὁ νῦν αἰὼν, present world, which they counted should last till the Messiah came: and so it did, and then had an end put to it. And to this he joins his last coming to judgment, in the glory of his Father, to put a final end to this world, and all the dispensation belonging to the posterity of Adam upon earth. This joining them together made his answer obscure, and hard to be understood by them then; nor was it safe for him to speak plainer of his kingdom, and the destruction of Jerusalem, unless he had a mind to be accused for having designs against the government. For Judas was amongst them: and whether no other but his apostles were comprehended under the name of his disciples, who were with him at this time, one cannot determine. Our Saviour therefore speaks of his kingdom in no other style but that which he had all along hitherto used, viz. 'The kingdom of God:' 'When you see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.' And continuing on his discourse with them, he has the same expression, Matt. xxv. 1: 'Then the kingdom of heaven shall be like

bationary command to this young man, to try whether he truly believed him to be the Messiah, and was ready to obey his commands, and relinquish all to follow him, when he, his prince, required it.

152. And therefore we see, Luke, xix. 14, where our Saviour takes notice of the Jews not receiving him as the Messiah, he expresses it thus: 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' It is not enough to believe him to be the Messiah, unless we also obey his laws, and take him to be our king to reign over us. Matt. xxii. 11—13: He that had not on the wedding garment, though he accepted of the invitation, and came to the wedding, was cast into outer darkness. By the wedding garment, it is evident good works are meant here. That wedding garment of fine linen, clean and white, which we are told is the δικαιώματα, 'righteous acts of the saints;'[1] or, as St. Paul calls it, 'the walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.'[2] This appears from the parable itself: 'The kingdom of heaven,' says our Saviour, 'is like unto a king who made a marriage for his son.' And here he distinguishes those who were invited into three sorts:—1. Those who were invited, and came not; that is, those who had the gospel, the good news of the kingdom of God proposed to them, but believed not. 2. Those who came, but had not on a wedding garment; that is, believed Jesus to be the

should sell all, and give it to the poor, which would render us poorer than any of them, he doubtless did intend we should suffer them to partake of what we have, and we can never be his disciples unless we do so.—Ed.

[1] Rev. xix. 8. [2] Ephes. iv. 1.

Messiah, but were not new clad (as I may so say) with a true repentance and amendment of life, nor adorned with those virtues which the apostle, Col. iii., requires to be put on. 3. Those who were invited, did come, and had on the wedding garment; that is, heard the gospel, believed Jesus to be the Messiah, and sincerely obeyed his laws. These three sorts are plainly designed here; whereof the last only were the blessed, who were to enjoy the kingdom prepared for them. Matt. xxiii.: 'Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even the Messiah, and ye all are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even the Messiah. But he that is greatest amongst you, shall be your servant; and whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted.' Luke, xxi. 34: 'Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be at any time overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life.' Luke, xxii. 25: 'He said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest amongst you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.' John, xiii. 34: 'A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another: by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.' This command of loving one another, is repeated again, chap. xv. 12, 17. John, xiv.: 'If ye love me, keep my commandments. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is

pentance, and the duties of a good life; yet it has been always 'the kingdom of God,' and 'the kingdom of heaven:' and I do not remember that anywhere, till now, he uses any such expression, as my kingdom. But here now he speaks in the first person, 'I will appoint you a kingdom;' and 'in my kingdom;' and this we see is only to the eleven, now Judas was gone from them.

124. With these eleven, whom he was now just leaving, he has a long discourse to comfort them for their loss of him, and to prepare them for the persecution of the world, and to exhort them to keep his commandments, and to love one another. And here one may expect all the articles of faith should be laid down plainly, if any thing else were required of them to believe, but what he had taught them, and they believed already; viz. 'That he was the Messiah,' John, xiv. 1. 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me,' verse 29. 'I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass ye may believe.' It is believing on him, without any thing else, John, xvi. 31: 'Jesus answered them, Do you now believe?' This was in answer to their professing, verse 30, 'Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou comest forth from God.' John, xvii. 20: 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.' All that is spoke of 'believing,' in this his last sermon to them, is only 'believing on him,' or believing that 'he came from God;' which was no other than believing him to be the Messiah.

125. Indeed, John, xiv., our Saviour tells Phi-

lip, 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father;' and adds, 'Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the works.' Which being in answer to Philip's words, verse 9, 'Show us the Father,' seem to import thus much: 'No man hath seen God at any time,' he is known only by his works. And that he is my Father, and I the Son of God,—that is, the Messiah,—you may know by the works I have done; which it is impossible I could do of myself, but by the union I have with God my Father. For that by being 'in God' and 'God in him,' he signifies such an union with God, that God operates in him, and by him, appears not only by the words above cited, out of verse 10; (which can scarce otherwise be made coherent sense;) but also from the same phrase used again by our Saviour presently after, verse 20: 'At that day,' viz. after his resurrection, when they should see him again, 'ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you;' that is, by the works I shall enable you to do, through a power I have received from the Father: which whoever sees me do, must acknowledge the Father to be in me; and whoever sees you do, must acknowledge me to be in you. And therefore he says, verse 12, 'Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he also do, because I go unto my Father.' Though I go away, yet I shall be in you who believe in me; and ye shall be enabled to do miracles also for the carrying on of my kingdom, as I have done: that it may be manifested to others, that you are sent by me, as I have evidenced to you that I am sent

by the Father; and hence it is that he says, in the immediate preceding verse 11, 'Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; if not, believe me for the sake of the works themselves.' Let the works that I have done convince you that I am sent by the Father, that he is with me, and that I do nothing but by his will, and by virtue of the union I have with him; and that, consequently, I am the Messiah, who am anointed, sanctified, and separated by the Father to the work for which he hath sent me.

126. To confirm them in this faith, and to enable them to do such works as he had done, he promises them the Holy Ghost, John xiv.: 'These things I have said unto you, being yet present with you;' but when I am gone, 'the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete,' (which may signify monitor as well as comforter, or advocate,) 'which the Father shall send you in my name, he shall show you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things which I have said.' So that, considering all that I have said, and laying it together, and comparing it with what you shall see come to pass, you may be more abundantly assured that I am the Messiah, and fully comprehend that I have done and suffered all things foretold of the Messiah, and that were to be accomplished and fulfilled by him, according to the Scriptures. But be not filled with grief that I leave you: 'It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Paraclete will not come unto you.' One reason why, if he went not away, the Holy Ghost could not come, we may gather from what has been observed concerning the prudent and wary carriage of our Saviour all through

his ministry, that he might not incur death with the least suspicion of a malefactor; and therefore, though his disciples believed him to be the Messiah, yet they neither understood it so well, nor were so well confirmed in the belief of it, as after that, he being crucified and risen again, they had received the Holy Ghost; and with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, a fuller and clearer evidence and knowledge that he was the Messiah. They then were enlightened to see how his kingdom was such as the Scriptures foretold; though not such as they, till then, had expected. And now this knowledge and assurance received from the Holy Ghost was of use to them after his resurrection; when they could now boldly go about, and openly preach, as they did, that Jesus was the Messiah, confirming that doctrine by the miracles which the Holy Ghost empowered them to do; but till he was dead and gone, they could not do this. Their going about openly preaching, as they did after his resurrection, that Jesus was the Messiah, and doing miracles everywhere to make it good, would not have consisted with that character of humility, peace, and innocence, which the Messiah was to sustain, if they had done it before his crucifixion; for this would have drawn upon him the condemnation of a malefactor, either as a stirrer of sedition against the public peace, or as a pretender to the kingdom of Israel. And hence we see, that they who before his death preached only 'the gospel of the kingdom,' that 'the kingdom of God was at hand;' as soon as they had received the Holy Ghost, after his resurrection, changed their style, and everywhere, in express words, declare, that Jesus is the Messiah, that king which was to come.

This the following words here, in St. John, xvi. 8—14, confirm; where he goes on to tell them: 'And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, because they believed not on me.' Your preaching, then, accompanied with miracles, by the assistance of the Holy Ghost, shall be a conviction to the world that the Jews sinned in not believing me to be the Messiah. 'Of righteousness,' or justice: 'Because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.' By the same preaching and miracles you shall confirm the doctrine of my ascension; and thereby convince the world that I was that just one, who am therefore ascended to the Father into heaven, where no unjust person shall enter. 'Of judgment: because the prince of this world is judged;' and by the same assistance of the Holy Ghost, ye shall convince the world that the devil is judged or condemned, by your casting of him out, and destroying his kingdom, and his worship, wherever you preach. Our Saviour adds, 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now.' They were yet so full of a temporal kingdom, that they could not bear the discovery of what kind of kingdom his was, nor what a king he was to be; and therefore he leaves them to the coming of the Holy Ghost, for a further and fuller discovery of himself, and the kingdom of the Messiah, for fear they should be scandalized in him, and give up the hopes they had now in him, and forsake him. This he tells them, verse 1, of this sixteenth chapter: 'These things I have said unto you, that you may not be scandalized.' The last thing he had told them before his saying this to them, we find in the last verses of the precedent chapter: 'When the Para-

clete is come, the Spirit of truth, he shall witness concerning me.' He shall show you who I am, and witness it to the world; and then 'ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.' He shall call to your mind what I have said and done, that ye may understand it, and know, and bear witness concerning me. And again here, John, xvi., after he had told them they could not bear what he had more to say, he adds, verse 13: 'Howbeit, when the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; and he will show you things to come: he shall glorify me.' By the Spirit, when he comes, ye shall be fully instructed concerning me; and though you cannot yet, from what I have said to you, clearly comprehend my kingdom and glory, yet he shall make it known to you wherein it consists: and though I am now in a mean state, and ready to be given up to contempt, torment, and death, so that ye know not what to think of it; yet the Spirit, when he comes, 'shall glorify me,' and fully satisfy you of my power and kingdom; and that I sit on the right hand of God, to order all things for the good and increase of it, till I come again at the last day in the fulness of glory.

127. Accordingly, the apostles had a full and clear sight and persuasion of this, after they had received the Holy Ghost; and they preached it everywhere boldly and openly, without the least remainder of doubt or uncertainty. But that even so late as this, they understood not his death and resurrection, is evident from verses 17, 18. 'Then said some of the disciples among themselves, What

is this that he saith unto us; a little while, and ye shall not see me; and again, a little while, and ye shall see me; and because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, a little while? We know not what he saith.' Upon which, he goes on to discourse to them of his death and resurrection, and of the power they should have of doing miracles. But all this he declares to them in a mystical and involved way of speaking; as he tells them himself, verse 25: 'These things have I spoken to you in proverbs;' that is, in general, obscure, enigmatical, or figurative terms. (All which, as well as allusive apologues, the Jews called proverbs or parables.) Hitherto my declaring of myself to you hath been obscure, and with reserve; and I have not spoken of myself to you in plain and direct words, because ye could not bear it. A Messiah, and not a king, you could not understand; and a king living in poverty and persecution, and dying the death of a slave and malefactor upon a cross, you could not put together. And had I told you in plain words, that I was the Messiah, and given you a direct commission to preach to others, that I professedly owned myself to be the Messiah, you and they would have made a commotion, to have set me upon the throne of my father David, and to fight for me; that your Messiah, your king, in whom are your hopes of a kingdom, should not be delivered up into the hands of his enemies, to be put to death; and of this, Peter will instantly give you a proof. But 'the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in parables; but I shall show unto you plainly of the Father.' My death and resurrection, and the coming of the Holy Ghost, will speedily en-

lighten you, and then I shall make you know the will and design of the Father; what a kingdom I am to have, and by what means, and to what end. And this the Father himself will show unto you; 'for he loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from the Father.' Because ye have believed that I am the 'Son of God, the Messiah;' that he hath anointed and sent me; though it hath not been yet fully discovered to you what kind of kingdom it shall be, nor by what means brought about. And then our Saviour, without being asked, explaining to them what he had said, and making them understand better, what before they stuck at, and complained secretly among themselves, that they understood not; they thereupon declare, 'Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee.' It is plain thou knowest men's thoughts and doubts before they ask. 'By this we believe that thou comest forth from God. Jesus answered, Do ye now believe?' Notwithstanding that you now believe that I came from God, and am the Messiah, sent by him; 'Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered;' and as it is, Matt. xxvi. 31, and 'shall all be scandalized in me.' What it is to be scandalized in him, we may see by what followed hereupon, if that which he says to St. Peter, Mark, xiv., did not sufficiently explain it.

128. This I have been the more particular in, that it may be seen, that in his last discourse to his disciples (where he opened himself more than he had hitherto done; and where, if any thing more was required to make them believers, than

what they already believed, we might have expected they should have heard of it) there were no new articles proposed to them, but what they believed before, viz.: that he was the Messiah, the Son of God, sent from the Father: though of his manner of proceeding, and his sudden leaving the world, and some few particulars, he made them understand something more than they did before. But as to the main design of the gospel, viz., that he had a kingdom, that he should be put to death, and rise again, and ascend into heaven to his Father, and come again in glory to judge the world, this he had told them; and so had acquainted them with the great council of God, in sending him, the Messiah, and omitted nothing that was necessary to be known or believed in it. And so he tells them himself, John, xv. 15: 'Henceforth I call ye not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord does: but I have called ye friends; for all things I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you;' though perhaps ye do not so fully comprehend them as you will shortly, when I am risen and ascended.

129. To conclude all, in his prayer, which shuts up this discourse, he tells the Father what he had made known to his apostles; the result whereof we have, John, xvii. 8: 'I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and they have believed that thou didst send me:' which is in effect, that he was the Messiah promised and sent by God. And then he prays for them, and adds, verse 20, 21, 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who believe on me through their word.' What that word was

through which others should believe in him, we have seen in the preaching of the apostles all through the history of the Acts, viz., this one great point, that Jesus was the Messiah. The apostles, he says, verse 25, 'know that thou hast sent me;' that is, are assured that I am the Messiah: and in verse 21 and 23, he prays, 'that the world may believe (which verse 23 is called knowing) that thou has sent me:' so that what Christ would have believed by his disciples, we may see by this, his last prayer for them, when he was leaving the world, as well as by what he preached whilst he was in it. And as a testimony of this, one of his last actions, even when he was upon the cross, was to confirm this doctrine, by giving salvation to one of the thieves that was crucified with him, upon his declaration that he believed him to be the Messiah; for so much the words of his request imported, when he said, 'Remember me, Lord, when thou comest into thy kingdom.' To which Jesus replied, 'Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise.' An expression very remarkable: for as Adam, by sin, lost paradise; that is, a state of happy immortality; here the believing thief, through his faith in Jesus, the Messiah, is promised to be put in paradise, and so reinstated in a happy immortality.

130. Thus our Saviour ended his life. And what he did after his resurrection St. Luke tells us, Acts, i. 3, that he showed himself to the apostles 'forty days, speaking things concerning the kingdom of God.' This was what our Saviour preached in the whole course of his ministry, before his passion; and no other mysteries of faith does he now

discover to them after his resurrection. All he says is concerning the kingdom of God; and what it was he said concerning that, we shall see presently, out of the other evangelists; having first only taken notice, that when they now asked him, 'Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?' he said unto them, 'It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put into his own power: but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me unto the utmost parts of the earth.' Their great business was to be witnesses to Jesus, of his life, death, resurrection and ascension; which, put together, were undeniable proofs of his being the Messiah. This was what they were to preach, and what he said to them concerning the kingdom of God, as will appear by what is recorded of it in the other evangelists.

131. When, on the day of his resurrection, he appeared to the two going to Emmaus, they declare what his disciples' faith in him was: 'But we trusted that it had been he that should have redeemed Israel;' that is, we believed that he was the Messiah, come to deliver the nation of the Jews. Upon this Jesus tells them, that they ought to believe him to be the Messiah, notwithstanding what had happened; nay, they ought, by his suffering and death, to be confirmed in that faith, that he was the Messiah. And 'beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself; how, that the Messiah ought to have suffered these things, and to have entered into his glory.' Now, he applies the prophesies of the Messiah to him-

self, which we read not that he did ever do before his passion. And afterwards appearing to the eleven, Luke, xxiv., he said unto them, 'the words which I spoke unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scripture; and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoveth the Messiah to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.' Here we see what it was he had preached to them, though not in so plain open words before his crucifixion; and what it is he now makes them understand; and what it was that was to be preached to all nations, viz., that he was the Messiah, that had suffered, and rose from the dead the third day, and fulfilled all things that were written in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah; and that those who believed this, and repented, should receive remission of their sins through this faith in him. Or, as St. Mark has it, ch. xvi., 'Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.' What the gospel, or good news was, we have showed already; viz., the happy tidings of the Messiah being come: and 'they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.' What the word was which they preached, and the Lord confirmed with miracles, we have seen already out of the history of their acts: I have already given an account of

their preaching everywhere, as it is recorded in the Acts, except some few places, where the kingdom of the Messiah is mentioned under the name of 'the kingdom of God,' which I forbore to set down, till I had made it plain out of the evangelists, that that was no other but the kingdom of the Messiah.

132. It may be seasonable therefore now, to add to those sermons we have formerly seen of St. Paul (wherein he preached no other article of faith, but that Jesus was the Messiah, the king, who being risen from the dead, now reigneth, and shall more publicly manifest his kingdom in judging the world at the last day) what further is left upon record of his preaching. At Ephesus, Paul went into the synagogues, and spake boldly for the space of three months; disputing and persuading concerning the kingdom of God.[1] At Miletus he thus takes leave of the elders of Ephesus: 'And now, behold, I know that ye all among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.'[2] What this preaching the kingdom of God was, he tells you, verse 20, 21: 'I have kept nothing back from you, which was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house; testifying both to the Jews and to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.' And so again: 'When they [the Jews at Rome] had appointed him [Paul] a day, there came many to him into his lodgings; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God; per-

[1] Acts, xix. [2] Ibid. xx.

suading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets, from morning to evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.'[1] And the history of the Acts is concluded with this account of St. Paul's preaching: 'And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him; preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus, the Messiah.' We may therefore here apply the same conclusion to the history of our Saviour written by the evangelists, and to the history of the apostles written in the Acts, which St. John does to his own gospel,[2] 'Many other signs did Jesus before his disciples:' and in many other places the apostles preached the same doctrine, 'which are not written' in these books; 'but these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; and, that believing, you may have life in his name.'

133. What St. John thought necessary and sufficient to be believed for the attaining eternal life, he here tells us. And this, not in the first dawning of the gospel, when, perhaps, some will be apt to think less was required to be believed than after the doctrine of faith, and mystery of salvation, was more fully explained in the epistles written by the aposltes. For it is to be remembered, that St. John says this not as soon as Christ was ascended; for these words, with the rest of St. John's gospel, were not written till many years after, not only the other gospels, and St. Luke's history of the Acts, but, in

[1] Acts, xxviii. [2] Chap. xx.

all appearance, after all the epistles written by the other apostles. So that above threescore years after our Saviour's passion, (for so long after, both Epiphanius and St. Jerome assure us this gospel was written,) St. John knew nothing else required to be believed for the attaining of life, but that 'Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.'

134. To this it is likely it will be objected by some, that to believe only that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, is but an historical and not a justifying or saving faith. To which I answer, that I allow to the makers of systems, and their followers, to invent and use what distinctions they please, and to call things by what names they think fit. But I cannot allow them, or to any man, an authority to make a religion for me, or to alter that which God hath revealed. And if they please to call the believing that which our Saviour and his apostles preached, and proposed alone to be believed, an historical faith, they have their liberty; but they must have a care how they deny it to be a justifying or saving faith, when our Saviour and his apostles have declared it so to be, and taught no other which men should receive, and whereby they should be made believers unto eternal life; unless they can so far make bold with our Saviour, for the sake of their beloved systems, as to say, that he forgot what he came into the world for; and that he and his apostles did not instruct people right in the way and mysteries of salvation: for that this is the sole doctrine pressed and required to be believed in the whole tenor of our Saviour's and his apostles' preaching, we have showed through the whole history of the evangelists and the Acts. And I

challenge them to show that there was any other doctrine, upon their assent to which, or disbelief of it, men were pronounced believers or unbelievers; and, accordingly received into the church of Christ, as members of his body, as far as mere believing could make them so, or else kept out of it: this was the only gospel article of faith which was preached to them. And if nothing else was preached everywhere, the apostle's argument will hold against any other articles of faith to be believed under the gospel, Rom. x. 14: 'How shall they believe that whereof they have not heard?' For to preach any other doctrines necessary to be believed, we do not find that any body was sent.

135. Perhaps it will be further argued, that this is not a saving faith, because such a faith as this the devils may have, and it was plain they had; for they believed and declared Jesus to be the Messiah. And St. James tells us, 'the devils believe, and tremble;' and yet they shall not be saved. To which I answer, 1. That they could not be saved by any faith, to whom it was not proposed as a means of salvation, nor ever promised to be counted for righteousness. This was an act of grace shown only to mankind. God dealt so favourably with the posterity of Adam, that if they would believe Jesus to be the Messiah, the promised king and Saviour, and perform what other conditions were required of them by the covenant of grace, God would justify them because of this belief; he would account this faith to them for righteousness, and look on it as making up the defects of their obedience; which being thus supplied by what was taken instead of it, they were looked on as just or

righteous, and so inherited eternal life. But this favour shown to mankind, was never offered to the fallen angels. They had no such proposals made to them; and therefore whatever of this kind was proposed to men, it availed not devils whatever they performed of it. This covenant of grace was never offered to them. 2. I answer, that though the devils believed, yet they could not be saved by the covenant of grace; because they performed not the other condition required in it, altogether as necessary to be performed as this of believing, and that is repentance. Repentance is as absolute a condition of the covenant of grace as faith, and as necessary to be performed as that. John the Baptist, who was to prepare the way for the Messiah, 'preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.'

136. As John began his preaching with 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,'[1] so did our Saviour begin his: 'From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Or, as St. Mark has it in the parallel place: 'Now, after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.'[2] This was not only the beginning of his preaching, but the sum of all that he did preach; viz. that men should repent, and believe the good tidings which he brought them; that the time was fulfilled for the coming of the Messiah. And this was what

[1] Matt. iii. iv. [2] Mark. i.

his apostles preached, when he sent them out: 'and they going out, preached that men should repent.'[1] Believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and repenting, were so necessary and fundamental parts of the covenant of grace, that one of them alone is often put for both. For here St. Mark mentions nothing but their preaching repentance; as St. Luke, in the parallel place, chapter ix. 6., mentions nothing but their evangelizing, or preaching the good news of the kingdom of the Messiah. And St. Paul often, in his epistles, puts faith for the whole duty of a Christian.[2] But yet the tenor of the gospel is what Christ declares, Luke, xii.: 'Unless ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.' And in the parable of the rich man in hell, delivered by our Saviour, repentance alone is the means proposed of avoiding that place of torment. And what the tenor of the doctrine, which should be preached to the world, should be, he tells his apostles after his resurrection, Luke, xxiv. 27, viz. 'That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name,' who was the Messiah. And accordingly believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and repenting, was what the apostles preached. So Peter began, Acts, ii. 38: 'Repent, and be baptized.' These two things were required for the remission of sins, viz. entering themselves in the kingdom of God, and owning and professing them-

[1] Mark, vi.

[2] And even in matters of faith, involuntary errors are harmless. "For heresy is not an error of the understanding, but an error of the will. And this is clearly insinuated in Scripture, in the style where *faith and a good life* are made one duty, and vice is called opposite to faith, and heresy opposed to holiness and sanctity."—Liberty of Prophesying. Sacred Classics, Vol. i. p. 31, 32.—Ed.

selves the subjects of Jesus, whom they believed to be the Messiah, and received for their Lord and King; for that was to be baptized in his name: baptism being an initiating ceremony known to the Jews, whereby those, who leaving heathenism, and professing a submission to the law of Moses, were received into the commonwealth of Israel. And so it was made use of by our Saviour, to be that solemn visible act, whereby those who believed him to be the Messiah, received him as their King, and professed obedience to him, were admitted as subjects into his kingdom: which in the gospels is called 'the kingdom of God;' and in the Acts and epistles often by another name, viz. the Church. The same St. Peter preaches again to the Jews, 'Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.'[1]

137. What this repentance was, which the new covenant required as one of the conditions to be performed by all those who should receive the benefits of that covenant, is plain in the Scripture, to be not only a sorrow for sins past, but (what is a natural consequence of such sorrow, if it be real) a turning from them, into a new and contrary life. And so they are joined together, Acts, iii.: 'Repent, and turn about;' or, as we render it, be converted. And, Acts, xxvi.: 'Repent and turn to God.' And sometimes turning about is put alone to signify repentance.[2] Which in other words is well expressed by newness of life. For it being certain, that he who is really sorry for his sins, and abhors them, will turn from them,

[1] Acts, iii. 19. [2] Matt. xiii. 15; Luke, xxii. 32.

and forsake them; either of these acts, which have so natural a connexion one with the other, may be, and is often put for both together. Repentance is a hearty sorrow for our past misdeeds, and a sincere resolution and endeavour, to the utmost of our power, to conform all our actions to the law of God. So that repentance does not consist in one single act of sorrow, (though that being the first and leading act, gives denomination to the whole,) but in doing works of repentance, in a sincere obedience to the law of Christ, the remainder of our lives. This was called for by John the Baptist, the preacher of repentance: 'Bring forth fruits meet for repentance.' And by St. Paul here, 'Repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.' There are works to follow belonging to repentance, as well as sorrow for what is past. These two, faith and repentance; that is, believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and a good life, are the indispensable conditions of the new covenant, to be performed by all those who would obtain eternal life. The reasonableness, or rather necessity of which, that we may the better comprehend, we must a little look back to what was said in the beginning.

138. Adam being the Son of God, and so St. Luke calls him, chapter iii. 38, had this part also of the likeness and image of his Father, viz. that he was immortal. But Adam transgressing the command given him by his heavenly Father, incurred the penalty, forfeited that state of immortality, and became mortal. After this, Adam begot children, but they were 'in his own likeness, after his own image;' mortal like their father. God,

nevertheless, out of his infinite mercy, willing to bestow eternal life on mortal men, sends Jesus Christ into the world; who being conceived in the womb of a virgin (that had not known man) by the immediate power of God, was properly the Son of God; according to what the angel declared to his mother, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.' So that being the Son of God, he was, like his Father, immortal; as he tells us, John, v. 'As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.'

139. And that immortality is a part of that image, wherein these (who were the immediate sons of God, so as to have no other father) were made like their father, appears probable, not only from the places in Genesis concerning Adam, above taken notice of, but seems to me also to be intimated in some expressions concerning Jesus, the Son of God. In the New Testament, he is called 'the image of the invisible God.'[1] Invisible seems put in, to obviate any gross imagination, that he (as images used to do) represented God in any corporeal or visible resemblance. And there is further subjoined, to lead us into the meaning of it, 'The first-born of every creature;' which is further explained, verse 18, where he is termed, 'The first-born from the dead:' thereby making out, and showing himself to be the image of the invisible God; that death hath no power over him: but

[1] Col. i. 15.

being the Son of God, and not having forfeited that sonship by any transgression, was the heir of eternal life; as Adam should have been, had he continued his filial duty. In the same sense the apostle seems to use the word image in other places, viz. 'Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.'[1] This image, to which they were conformed, seems to be immortality and eternal life. For it is remarkable, that in both these places St. Paul speaks of the resurrection, and that Christ was 'the first-born among many brethren;' he being by birth the Son of God, and the others only by adoption, as we see in this same chapter: 'Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father: the Spirit itself bearing witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; and joint-heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together.' And hence we see that our Saviour vouchsafes to call those, who at the day of judgment are through him entering into eternal life, his brethren: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren.' May we not in this find a reason why God so frequently in the New Testament, and so seldom, if at all, in the Old, is mentioned under the single title of the Father? And therefore our Saviour says, 'No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.' God has now a Son again in the world, the first-born of many brethren, who all now, by the Spirit

[1] Rom. viii. 29.

of adoption, can say, Abba, Father; and we, by adoption, being for his sake made his brethren, and the sons of God, come to share in that inheritance which was his natural right, he being by birth the Son of God: which inheritance is eternal life. And again: 'We groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption; to wit, the redemption of our body;' whereby is plainly meant the change of these frail mortal bodies, into the spiritual immortal bodies at the resurrection: 'When this mortal shall have put on immortality,' which he further expresses thus: 'So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body,' &c. To which he subjoins, 'As we have borne the image of the earthy' (that is, as we have been mortal, like earthy Adam, our father, from whom we are descended, when he was turned out of paradise) 'we shall also bear the image of the heavenly;' into whose sonship and inheritance being adopted, we shall, at the resurrection, receive that adoption we expect; 'even the redemption of our bodies;' and after his image, which is the image of the Father, become immortal. Hear what he himself says: 'They who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage. Neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels, and are the sons of God, being the sons of the resurrection.' And he that shall read St. Paul's argument, Acts, xiii., will find, that the great evidence that Jesus was the Son of God was his resurrection.

Then the image of his Father appeared in him, when he visibly entered into the state of immortality. For thus the apostle reasons: 'We preach to you, how that the promise which was made to our fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.'

140. This may serve a little to explain the immortality of the sons of God, who are in this, like their Father, made after his image and likeness. But that our Saviour was so, he himself further declares, John, x., where, speaking of his life, he says: 'No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again.' Which he could not have had if he had been a mortal man, the son of a man of the seed of Adam; or else had by any transgression forfeited his life: for 'the wages of sin is death.' And he that hath incurred death for his own transgression, cannot lay down his life for another, as our Saviour professes he did. For he was the Just One, 'who knew no sin, who did no sin; neither was guile found in his mouth.' And thus, 'As by man came death, so by man came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.'

141. For this laying down his life for others, our Saviour tells us, 'Therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again.' And this, his obedience and suffering, was rewarded with a kingdom, which he tells us, 'his Father had appointed unto him;' and which

it is evident, out of the epistle to the Hebrews, he had a regard to in his sufferings: 'Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.' Which kingdom, given him upon this account of his obedience, suffering, and death, he himself takes notice of in these words: 'Jesus lift up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus the Messiah, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.' And St. Paul, in his epistle to the Philippians: 'He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.'

142. Thus God, we see, designed his Son Christ Jesus a kingdom, an everlasting kingdom in heaven. But 'though as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive;' and all men shall return to life again at the last day; yet all men having sinned, and thereby 'come short of the glory of God,' as St. Paul assures us; (that is, not attaining to the heavenly kingdom of the Messiah, which is often called the 'glory of God;' as may be seen,

Rom. v. 2, and xv. 7, and ii. 7; Matt. xvi. 27; Mark, viii. 38: for no one who is unrighteous, that is, comes short of perfect righteousness, shall be admitted into the eternal life of that kingdom; as is declared, 1 Cor. vi. 9: 'The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God;) and death, the wages of sin, being the portion of all those who had transgressed the righteous law of God, the Son of God would in vain have come into the world, to lay the foundations of a kingdom, and gather together a select people out of the world, if (they being found guilty at their appearance before the judgment-seat of the righteous Judge of all men at the last day) instead of entrance into eternal life in the kingdom he had prepared for them, they should receive death, the just reward of sin, which every one of them was guilty of. This second death would have left him no subjects; and instead of those ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, there would not have been one left him to sing praises unto his name, saying, 'Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.' God therefore, out of his mercy to mankind, and for the erecting of the kingdom of his Son, and furnishing it with subjects out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, proposed to the children of men, that as many of them as would believe Jesus his Son (whom he sent into the world) to be the Messiah, the promised deliverer, and would receive him for their king and ruler, should have all their past sins, disobedience, and rebellion forgiven them; and if for the future they lived in a sincere obedience to his law, to the utmost of their power, the sins of hu-

man frailty for the time to come, as well as all those of their past lives, should, for his Son's sake, because they gave themselves up to him to be his subjects, be forgiven them; and so their faith, which made them be baptized into his name, (that is, enrol themselves in the kingdom of Jesus the Messiah, and profess themselves his subjects, and consequently live by the laws of his kingdom,) should be accounted to them for righteousness; that is, should supply the defects of a scanty obedience in the sight of God; who counting this faith to them for righteousness, or complete obedience, did thus justify, or make them just, and thereby capable of eternal life.

143. Now, that this is the faith for which God, of his free grace, justifies sinful man, (for it is God alone that justifieth,) we have already showed, by observing through all the history of our Saviour and the apostles, recorded in the evangelists, and in the Acts, what he and his apostles preached and proposed to be believed. We shall show now, that besides believing him to be the Messiah their king, it was further required, that those who would have the privilege, advantage, and deliverance of his kindom, should enter themselves into it; and by baptism being made denizens, and solemnly incorporated into that kingdom, live as became subjects obedient to the laws of it: for if they believed him to be their Messiah, the king, but would not obey his laws, and would not have him to reign over them, they were but the greater rebels; and God would not justify them for a faith that did but increase their guilt, and oppose diametrically the kingdom and design of the Messiah; 'who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us

from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works,' Titus, ii. 14. And therefore St. Paul tells the Galatians, that that which availeth is faith; but 'faith working by love:' and that 'faith without works,' that is, the works of sincere obedience to the law and will of Christ, is not sufficient for our justification, St. James shows at large, chap. ii.

144. Neither indeed could it be otherwise; for life, eternal life, being the reward of justice or righteousness only, appointed by the righteous God (who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity) to those only who had no taint or infection of sin upon them, it is impossible that he should justify those who had no regard to justice at all, whatever they believed. This would have been to encourage iniquity, contrary to the purity of his nature, and to have condemned that eternal law of right which is holy, just, and good: of which no one precept or rule is abrogated or repealed, nor indeed can be, whilst God is an holy, just, and righteous God, and man a rational creature. The duties of that law, arising from the constitution of his very nature, are of eternal obligation; nor can it be taken away, or dispensed with, without changing the nature of things, or overturning the measures of right and wrong, and thereby introducing and authorizing irregularity, confusion, and disorder in the world. Christ's coming into the world was not for such an end as that; but, on the contrary, to reform the corrupt state of degenerate man, and out of those who would mend their lives, and bring forth fruit meet for repentance, erect a new kingdom.

145. This is the law of that kingdom, as well as of all mankind; and that law by which all men shall be judged at the last day. Only those who have believed Jesus to be the Messiah, and have taken him to be their king, with a sincere endeavour after righteousness, in obeying his law, shall have their past sins not imputed to them; and shall have that faith taken instead of obedience, where frailty and weakness made them transgress, and sin prevailed after conversion in those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, (or perfect obedience,) and do not allow themselves in acts of disobedience and rebellion, against the laws of that kingdom they are entered into. He did not expect, it is true, a perfect obedience, void of all slips and falls; he knew our make, and the weakness of our constitutions too well, and was sent with a supply for that defect. Besides, perfect obedience was the righteousness of the law of works; and then the reward would be of debt, and not of grace; and to such there was no need of faith to be imputed to them for righteousness. They stood upon their own legs, were just already, and needed no allowance to be made them for believing Jesus to be the Messiah, taking him for their king, and becoming his subjects. But that Christ does require obedience, sincere obedience, is evident from the laws he himself delivers, (unless he can be supposed to give and inculcate laws only to have them disobeyed,) and from the sentence he will pass when he comes to judge.

146. The faith required was, to believe Jesus to be the Messiah, the anointed, who had been promised by God to the world. Amongst the Jews (to

whom the promises and prophecies of the Messiah were more immediately delivered) anointing was used to three sorts of persons at their inauguration, whereby they were set apart to three great offices, viz., of priests, prophets, and kings. Though these three offices be in holy writ attributed to our Saviour, yet I do not remember that he anywhere assumes to himself the title of a priest, or mentions any thing relating to his priesthood; nor does he speak of his being a prophet but very sparingly, and once or twice, as it were, by the by: but the gospel, or the good news of the kingdom of the Messiah, is what he preaches everywhere, and makes it his great business to publish to the world. This he did, not only as most agreeable to the expectation of the Jews, who looked for their Messiah chiefly as coming in power to be their king and deliverer; but as it best answered the chief end of his coming, which was to be a king, and as such to be received by those who would be his subjects in the kingdom which he came to erect. And though he took not directly on himself the title of king till he was in custody, and in the hands of Pilate, yet it is plain king, and king of Israel, were the familiar and received titles of the Messiah.[1] What those were to do, who believed him to be the Messiah, and received him for their king, that they might be admitted to be partakers with him of his kingdom in glory, we shall best know by the laws he gives them, and requires them to obey; and by

[1] See John, i. 50; Luke, xix. 38, compared with Matt. xxi. 9, and Mark, xi. 9; John, xii. 13; Matt. xxi. 5; Luke, xxiii. 2, compared with Matt. xxvii. 11, and John, xviii. 33, 37; Mark, xv. 12, compared with Matt. xxvii. 22; Matt. xxvii. 42.

the sentence which he himself will give, when, sitting on his throne, they shall all appear at his tribunal, to receive every one his doom from the mouth of this righteous Judge of all men.

147. What he proposes to his followers to be believed, we have already seen, by examining his, and his apostles' preaching, step by step, all through the history of the four evangelists, and the Acts of the Apostles. The same method will best and plainest show us, whether he required of those who believed him to be the Messiah, any thing besides that faith, and what it was. For he being a king, we shall see by his commands what he expects from his subjects: for if he did not expect obedience to them, his commands would be but mere mockery; and if there were no punishment for the transgressors of them, his laws would not be the laws of a king, that had authority to command, and power to chastise the disobedient; but empty talk, without force, and without influence.

148. We shall therefore, from his injunctions, (if any such there be,) see what he has made necessary to be performed, by all those who shall be received into eternal life in his kingdom prepared in the heavens: and in this we cannot be deceived. What we have from his own mouth, especially if repeated over and over again, in different places and expressions, will be past doubt and controversy. I shall pass by all that is said by St. John Baptist, or any other, before our Saviour's entry upon his ministry and public promulgation of the laws of his kingdom. He began his preaching with a command to repent; as St. Matthew tells

us: 'From that time Jesus began to preach; saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand:' and, Luke, v. 32, he tells the Scribes and Pharisees, 'I come not to call the righteous,' (those who were truly so, needed no help; they had a right to the tree of life,) 'but sinners to repentance.'

149. In his sermon, as it is called, in the mount, he commands they should be exemplary in good works. 'Let your light so shine amongst men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' And that they might know what he came for, and what he expected of them, he tells them, 'Think not that I am come to dissolve or loosen the law, or the prophets: I am not come to dissolve or loosen, but to make it full, or complete;' by giving it you in its true and strict sense. Here we see he confirms, and at once reinforces all the moral precepts in the Old Testament. 'For verily I say to you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be done. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least (that is, as it is interpreted, shall not be at all) in the kingdom of heaven. I say unto you, that except your righteousness,' that is, your performance of the eternal law of right, 'shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven:' and then he goes on to make good what he said, 'that he was come to complete the law,' viz., by giving its full and clear sense, free from the corrupt and loosening glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees. He tells them, that not only murder, but causeless

anger, and so much as words of contempt, were forbidden. He commands them to be reconciled and kind towards their adversaries; and that upon pain of condemnation. In the following part of his sermon, which is to be read, Luke, vi., and more at large, Matt. v. vi. vii., he not only forbids actual uncleanness, but all irregular desires, upon pain of hell-fire; causeless divorces, swearing in conversation, as well as forswearing in judgment, revenge, retaliation, ostentation of charity, of devotion, and of fasting, repetitions in prayer, covetousness, worldly care, censoriousness: and on the other side, commands loving our friends, doing good to those that hate us, blessing those that curse us, praying for those that despitefully use us; patience and meekness under injuries; forgiveness, liberality, compassion: and closes all his particular injunctions with this general golden rule: 'All things whatsoever ye would have that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.' And to show how much he is in earnest, and expects obedience to these laws, he tells them, that if they obey, 'great shall be their reward; they shall be called the sons of the Highest.'[1] And to all this, in the conclusion, he adds this solemn sanction: 'Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?' It is in vain for you to take me for the Messiah, your king, unless you obey me. 'Not every one who calls me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, or be the sons of God; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' To such disobedient subjects, though

[1] Luke, vi. 35.

they have prophesied and done miracles in my name, I shall say at the day of judgment, 'Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I know you not.'

150. When he was told that his mother and brethren sought to speak with him, 'stretching out his hands to his disciples, he said, Behold my mother and my brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of my Father, who is in heaven, he is my brother and sister, and mother.' They could not be children of the adoption, and fellow-heirs with him of eternal life, who did not do the will of his heavenly Father. Matt. xv. and Mark, vii., the Pharisees finding fault, that his disciples eat with unclean hands, he makes this declaration to his apostles: 'Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever from without entereth into a man, cannot defile him; because it enters not into his heart, but his belly. That which cometh out of the man that defileth the man: for from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, false witnesses, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these ill things come from within, and defile a man.' He commands self-denial, and the exposing ourselves to suffering and danger, rather than to deny or disown him; and this upon pain of losing our souls, which are of more worth than all the world.[1]

151. The apostles disputing amongst them who should be greatest in the kingdom of the Messiah,

[1] This we may read, Matt. xvi. 24, 27, and the parallel places. Matt. viii. and Luke, ix.

he thus determines the controversy: 'If any one will be first, let him be last of all, and servant of all:' and setting a child before them, adds, 'Verily I say unto you, unless ye turn, and become as children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Matt. xviii. 15, 'If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen and publican. Peter said, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus said unto him, I say not unto thee till seven times, but until seventy times seven.' And then ends the parable of the servant, who being himself forgiven, was rigorous to his fellow-servant, with these words: 'And his lord was wrath, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if you from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.' Luke, x. 25, to the lawyer, asking him, 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life? he said, What is written in the law? How readest thou? He answered, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.' Jesus said, 'This do, and thou shalt live.' And when the lawyer, upon our Saviour's parable of the good Samaritan, was forced to confess, that he that

showed mercy was his neighbour, Jesus dismissed him with this charge: 'Go, and do thou likewise.' Luke, xi. 41, 'Give alms of such things as ye have: behold, all things are clean unto you.' Luke, xii. 15, 'Take heed, and beware of covetousness. Be not solicitous what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor what ye shall put on;' be not fearful or apprehensive of want, 'for it is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom. Sell that you have and give alms: and provide yourselves bags that wax not old, and treasure in the heavens that faileth not; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Let your loins be girded, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for the lord, when he will return. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Blessed is that servant, whom the lord having made ruler of his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season, the lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him a ruler over all that he hath. But if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to beat the men-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with unbelievers. And that servant who knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself; neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes: for he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes; for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to

whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.' Luke, xiv. 11: 'Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.' Verse 12: 'When thou makest a dinner or supper, call not thy friends, or thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy neighbours, lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor and maimed, the lame and the blind, and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.' Verse 33: 'So likewise, whosoever he be of you that is not ready to forego all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.' Luke, xvi. 9: 'I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?' Luke, xvii. 3: 'If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him.' Luke, xviii. 1: 'He spoke a parable to them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.' Verse 18: 'One comes to him, and asks him, saying, Master, What shall I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus said to him, If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He says, which? Jesus said, Thou knowest the commandments: Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not

steal; Thou shalt not bear false witness; Defraud not; Honour thy father and thy mother; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. He said, All these have I observed from my youth. Jesus hearing this, loved him; and said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.' To understand this right, we must take notice, that this young man asks our Saviour what he must do to be admitted effectually into the kingdom of the Messiah? The Jews believed that when the Messiah came, those of their nation that received him should not die; but that they, with those who, being dead, should then be raised again by him, should enjoy eternal life with him. Our Saviour, in answer to this demand, tells the young man, that to obtain the eternal life of the kingdom of the Messiah, he must keep the commandments. And then enumerating several of the precepts of the law, the young man says he had observed these from his childhood: for which, the text tells us, Jesus loved him. But our Saviour, to try whether in earnest he believed him to be the Messiah, and resolved to take him to be his king, and to obey him as such, bids him give all he has to the poor, and come, and follow him, and he should have treasure in heaven. This I look on to be the meaning of the place: this of selling all he had, and giving it to the poor, not being a standing law of his kingdom,[1] but a pro-

[1] Doubtless not; yet he who revels in superfluities while his poorer brother in Christ lacks the very necessaries of life, *is*, in the true sense of the words, *not a Christian*. Few, I am afraid, are inclined to interpret this, and similar passages, half so literally as they were meant: but, if Christ never intended we

bationary command to this young man, to try whether he truly believed him to be the Messiah, and was ready to obey his commands, and relinquish all to follow him, when he, his prince, required it.

152. And therefore we see, Luke, xix. 14, where our Saviour takes notice of the Jews not receiving him as the Messiah, he expresses it thus: 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' It is not enough to believe him to be the Messiah, unless we also obey his laws, and take him to be our king to reign over us. Matt. xxii. 11—13: He that had not on the wedding garment, though he accepted of the invitation, and came to the wedding, was cast into outer darkness. By the wedding garment, it is evident good works are meant here. That wedding garment of fine linen, clean and white, which we are told is the δικαιώματα, 'righteous acts of the saints;'[1] or, as St. Paul calls it, 'the walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.'[2] This appears from the parable itself: 'The kingdom of heaven,' says our Saviour, 'is like unto a king who made a marriage for his son.' And here he distinguishes those who were invited into three sorts:—1. Those who were invited, and came not; that is, those who had the gospel, the good news of the kingdom of God proposed to them, but believed not. 2. Those who came, but had not on a wedding garment; that is, believed Jesus to be the

should sell all, and give it to the poor, which would render us poorer than any of them, he doubtless did intend we should suffer them to partake of what we have, and we can never be his disciples unless we do so.—Ed.

[1] Rev. xix. 8. [2] Ephes. iv. 1.

Messiah, but were not new clad (as I may so say) with a true repentance and amendment of life, nor adorned with those virtues which the apostle, Col. iii., requires to be put on. 3. Those who were invited, did come, and had on the wedding garment; that is, heard the gospel, believed Jesus to be the Messiah, and sincerely obeyed his laws. These three sorts are plainly designed here; whereof the last only were the blessed, who were to enjoy the kingdom prepared for them. Matt. xxiii.: 'Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even the Messiah, and ye all are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even the Messiah. But he that is greatest amongst you, shall be your servant; and whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted.' Luke, xxi. 34: 'Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be at any time overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life.' Luke, xxii. 25: 'He said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest amongst you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.' John, xiii. 34: 'A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another: by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.' This command of loving one another, is repeated again, chap. xv. 12, 17. John, xiv.: 'If ye love me, keep my commandments. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is

that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him. If a man loveth me, he will keep my words. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings.' John, xv.: 'In this is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.'

153. Thus we see our Saviour not only confirmed the moral law, and clearing it from the corrupt glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees, showed the strictness as well as obligation of its injunctions; but moreover, upon occasion, requires the obedience of his disciples to several of the commands he afresh lays upon them, with the enforcement of unspeakable rewards and punishments in another world, according to their obedience or disobedience. There is not, I think, any of the duties of morality which he has not, somewhere or other, by himself and his apostles, inculcated over and over again to his followers in express terms. And is it for nothing that he is so instant with them to bring forth fruit? Does he their king command, and is it an indifferent thing? Or will their happiness or misery not at all depend upon it, whether they obey or no? They were required to believe him to be the Messiah; which faith is of grace promised to be reckoned to them for the completing of their righteousness, wherein it was defective: but righteousness, or obedience to the law of God, was their great business, which, if they could have attained by their own performances, there would have been no need of this gracious allowance in reward of their faith; but eternal life, after the resurrection,

had been their due by a former covenant, even that of works, the rule whereof was never abolished, though the rigour was abated. The duties enjoined in it were duties still: their obligations had never ceased, nor a wilful neglect of them was ever dispensed with; but their past transgressions were pardoned to those who received Jesus, the promised Messiah, for their king; and their future slips covered, if, renouncing their former iniquities, they entered into his kingdom, and continued his subjects, with a steady resolution and endeavour to obey his laws. This righteousness therefore, a complete obedience and freedom from sin, are still sincerely to be endeavoured after: and it is nowhere promised, that those who persist in a wilful disobedience to his laws, shall be received into the eternal bliss of his kingdom, how much soever they believe in him.

154. A sincere obedience, how can any one doubt to be, or scruple to call, a condition of the new covenant, as well as faith, who ever read our Saviour's sermon on the mount, to omit all the rest? Can any thing be more express than these words of our Lord: 'If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses:' and, 'If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them?' This is so indispensable a condition of the new covenant, that believing without it will not do, nor be accepted, if our Saviour knew the terms on which he would admit men into life. 'Why call ye me Lord, Lord,' says he, 'and do not the things

which I say?'[1] It is not enough to believe him to be the Messiah, the Lord, without obeying him: for that these he speaks to here were believers is evident from the parallel place, where it is recorded: 'Not every one who says, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father, which is in heaven.'[2] No rebels, or refractory disobedient, shall be admitted there, though they have so far believed in Jesus as to be able to do miracles in his name; as is plain out of the following words: 'Many will say to me in that day, Have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye workers of iniquity!'

155. This part of the new covenant the apostles also, in their preaching the gospel of the Messiah, ordinarily joined with the doctrine of faith. St. Peter, in his first sermon, Acts, ii., when they were pricked in heart, and asked, 'What shall we do?' says, verse 38, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.' The same he says to them again in his next speech, Acts, iv. 26: 'Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you.' How was this done? 'In turning away every one from your iniquities.' The same doctrine they preach to the high-priest and rulers: 'The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his

[1] Luke, vi. 46. [2] Matt. vii. 21—23.

right hand, to be a prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins: and we are witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.'[1] Acts, xvii. 30: 'St. Paul tells the Athenians, that now, under the gospel, 'God commandeth all men everywhere to repent.' Acts, xx. 21: St. Paul, in his last conference with the elders of Ephesus, professes to have taught them the whole doctrine necessary to salvation. 'I have,' says he, 'kept back nothing that was profitable unto you; but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and to the Greeks;' and then gives an account what his preaching had been, viz. 'Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus, the Messiah.' This was the sum and substance of the gospel which St. Paul preached, and was all that he knew necessary to salvation, viz. 'repentance, and believing Jesus to be the Messiah;' and so takes his last farewell of them whom he should never see again, verse 32, in these words: 'And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.' There is an inheritance conveyed by the word and covenant of grace, but it is only to those who are sanctified.

156. Acts, xxiv. 24: When Felix sent for Paul, that he and his wife Drusilla might hear him, concerning the faith in Christ, Paul reasoned of righteousness, or justice, and temperance; the duties we

[1] Acts, v. 30.

owe to others, and to ourselves, and of the judgment to come; till he made Felix to tremble. Whereby it appears, that temperance and justice were fundamental parts of the religion that Paul professed, and were contained in the faith which he preached. And if we find the duties of the moral law not pressed by him everywhere, we must remember, that most of his sermons left upon record, were preached in their synagogues to the Jews, who acknowledged their obedience due to all the precepts of the law, and would have taken it amiss to have been suspected not to have been more zealous for the law than he; and therefore it was with reason that his discourses were directed chiefly to what they yet wanted, and were averse to, the knowledge and embracing of Jesus, their promished Messiah. But what his preaching generally was, if we will believe him himself, we may see, Acts, xxvi., where, giving an account to king Agrippa of his life and doctrine, he tells him, 'I showed unto them at Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.'

157. Thus we see, by the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles, that he required of those who believed him to be the Messiah, and received him for their Lord and deliverer, that they should live by his laws; and that (though in consideration of their becoming his subjects, by faith in him, whereby they believed and took him to be the Messiah, their former sins should be forgiven) yet he would own none to be his, nor receive them as true denizens of the New Jerusalem, into the in-

heritance of eternal life, but leave them to the condemnation of the unrighteous, who renounced not their former miscarriages, and lived in a sincere obedience to his commands. What he expects from his followers, he has sufficiently declared as a legislator; and that they may not be deceived, by mistaking the doctrine of faith, grace, free grace, and the pardon and forgiveness of sins and salvation by him, (which was the great end of his coming,) he more than once declares to them for what omissions and miscarriages he shall judge and condemn to death, even those who have owned him, and done miracles in his name, when he comes at last to render to every one according to what he had done in the flesh, sitting upon his great and glorious tribunal, at the end of the world.

158. The first place where we find our Saviour to have mentioned the day of judgment is John, v. 28, 29, in these words: 'The hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his [that is, the Son of God's] voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.' That which puts the distinction, if we will believe our Saviour, is the having 'done good or evil;' and he gives a reason of the necessity of his judging or condemning those 'who have done evil,' in the following words, verse 30: 'I can of my ownself do nothing. As I hear I judge, and my judgment is just; because I seek not my own will, but the will of my Father who hath sent me.' He could not judge of himself; he had but a delegated power of judging from the Father, whose will he obeyed in it, and

who was of purer eyes than to admit any unjust person into the kingdom of heaven. Matt. vii. 22, 23: 'Speaking again of that day, he tells what his sentence will be: 'Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.' Faith, in the penitent and sincerely obedient, supplies the defect of their performances, and so by grace they are made just. But we may observe, none are sentenced or punished for unbelief, but only for their misdeeds. They 'are workers of iniquity' on whom the sentence is pronounced. Matt. xiii. 14: 'At the end of the world, the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all scandals, and them which do iniquity, and cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.' And again: 'The angels shall sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire.' Matt. xvi. 24: 'For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.' Luke, xiii. 26: 'Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not: Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.' Matt. xxv. 24—26: 'When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations, he shall set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on his left: then shall the King say to them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed

me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee?' &c. 'And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not. Insomuch that ye did it not to one of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.'

159. These, I think, are all the places where our Saviour mentions the last judgment, or describes his way of proceeding in that great day; wherein, as we have observed, it is remarkable, that everywhere the sentence follows doing or not doing, without any mention of believing, or not believing. Not that any to whom the gospel hath been preached shall be saved without believing Jesus to be the Messiah; for all being sinners, and transgressors of the law, and so unjust, are all liable to condemnation, unless they believe, and so through grace are justified by God for this faith, which shall be accounted to them for righteousness: but the rest, wanting this cover, this allowance for their transgressions, must answer for all their actions; and being found transgressors of the law, shall, by the

letter and sanction of that law, be condemned, for not having paid a full obedience to that law, and not for want of faith; that is not the guilt on which the punishment is laid, though it be the want of faith which lays open their guilt uncovered, and exposes them to the sentence of the law against all that are unrighteous.

160. The common objection here is, if all sinners shall be condemned, but such as have a gracious allowance made them, and so are justified by God for believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and so taking him for their king, whom they are resolved to obey to the utmost of their power, what shall become of all mankind who lived before our Saviour's time, who never heard of his name, and consequently could not believe in him? To this the answer is so obvious and natural, that one would wonder how any reasonable man should think it worth the urging. Nobody was, or can be, required to believe what was never proposed to him to believe. Before the fulness of time, which God from the council of his own wisdom had appointed to send his Son in, he had, at several times and in different manners, promised to the people of Israel an extraordinary person to come, who, raised from amongst themselves, should be their ruler and deliverer. The time, and other circumstances of his birth, life, and person, he had, in sundry prophecies, so particularly described, and so plainly foretold, that he was well known and expected by the Jews, under the name of the Messiah, or Anointed, given him in some of these prophecies. All then that was required before his appearing in the world was, to believe what God

had revealed, and to rely with a full assurance on God for the performance of his promise; and to believe, that in due time he would send them the Messiah, this anointed king, this promised Saviour and deliverer, according to his word. This faith in the promises of God, this relying and acquiescing in his word and faithfulness, the Almighty takes well at our hands, as a great mark of homage, paid by us frail creatures, to his goodness and truth, as well as to his power and wisdom; and accepts it as an acknowledgment of his peculiar providence and benignity to us. And therefore our Saviour tells us, John, xii. 44: 'He that believes on me, believes not on me, but on him that sent me.' The works of nature show his wisdom and power: but it is his peculiar care of mankind, most eminently discovered in his promises to them, that shows his bounty and goodness; and consequently engages their hearts in love and affection to him. This oblation of a heart fixed with dependence on, and affection to him, is the most acceptable tribute we can pay him; the foundation of true devotion, and life of all religion. What a value he puts on this depending on his word, and resting satisfied in his promises, we have an example in Abraham, whose faith 'was counted to him for righteousness,' as we have before remarked out of Rom. iv. And his relying firmly on the promise of God, without any doubt of its performance, gave him the name of the father of the faithful, and gained him so much favour with the Almighty, that he was called the 'friend of God;' the highest and most glorious title that can be bestowed on a creature. The thing promised was no more but a son by his wife Sarah, and a numerous posterity by him, which should possess the land of Canaan. These were

but temporal blessings, and (except the birth of a son) very remote, such as he should never live to see, nor in his own person have the benefit of; but because he questioned not the performance of it, but rested fully satisfied in the goodness, truth, and faithfulness of God who had promised, it was counted to him for righteousness. Let us see how St. Paul expresses it: 'Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be: and being not weak in his faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old; neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was able to perform: and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.'[1] St. Paul having here emphatically described the strength and firmness of Abraham's faith, informs us, that he thereby gave glory to God; and therefore it was accounted to him for righteousness.' This is the way that God deals with poor frail mortals. He is graciously pleased to take it well of them, and give it the place of righteousness, and a kind of merit in his sight, if they believe his promises, and have a steadfast relying on his veracity and goodness. St. Paul tells us, 'Without faith it is impossible to please God:'[2] but at the same time tells us what faith that is. 'For,' says he, 'he that cometh to God, must believe that he is; and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' He must be persuaded of God's mercy and good will

[1] Rom. iv. 18—22. [2] Heb. xi. 6.

to those who seek to obey him, and rest assured of his rewarding those who rely on him, for whatever, either by the light of nature or particular promises, he has revealed to them of his tender mercies, and taught them to expect from his bounty. This description of faith (that we might not mistake what he means by that faith without which we cannot please God, and which recommended the saints of old) St. Paul places in the middle of the list of those who were eminent for their faith, and whom he sets as patterns to the converted Hebrews under persecution, to encourage them to persist in their confidence of deliverance by the coming of Jesus Christ, and in their belief of the promises they now had under the gospel: by those examples he exhorts them not to draw back from the hope that was set before them, nor apostatize from the profession of the Christian religion. This is plain from verses 35—38, of the precedent chapter: 'Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have great need of persisting,' or perseverance, (for so the Greek word signifies here, which our translation renders patience,[1]) 'that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith. But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.'

161. The examples of faith which St. Paul enumerates and proposes in the following words, plainly show, that the faith whereby those be-

[1] See Luke, viii. 15.

lievers of old pleased God, was nothing but a steadfast reliance on the goodness and faithfulness of God, for those good things which either the light of nature or particular promises had given them grounds to hope for. Of what avail this faith was with God we may see: 'By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain; by which he obtained witness that he was righteous. By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet,' being wary, 'by faith prepared an ark, to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.' And what it was that God so graciously accepted and rewarded we are told, verse 11: 'Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child, when she was past age.' How she came to obtain this grace from God the apostle tells us: 'Because she judged him faithful who had promised.' Those therefore who pleased God, and were accepted by him before the coming of Christ, did it only by believing the promises, and relying on the goodness of God, as far as he had revealed it to them. For the apostle, in the following words, tells us, verse 13: 'These all died in faith, not having received (the accomplishment of) the promises; but having seen them afar off: and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.' This was all that was required of them, to be persuaded of, and embrace the promises which they had. They could be persuaded of no more than was proposed to them; embrace no more than was revealed, according to

the promises they had received, and the dispensations they were under. And if the faith of things 'seen afar off;' if their trusting in God for the promises he then gave them; if a belief of the Messiah to come, were sufficient to render those who lived in the ages before Christ, acceptable to God and righteous before him, I desire those who tell us that God will not (nay, some go so far as to say cannot) accept any who do not believe every article of their particular creeds and systems, to consider, why God, out of his infinite mercy, cannot as well justify man now for believing Jesus of Nazareth to be the promised Messiah, the king and deliverer, as those heretofore, who believed only that God would, according to his promise, in due time, send the Messiah to be a king and deliverer?

162. There is another difficulty often to be met with, which seems to have something of more weight in it; and that is, that though the faith of those before Christ (believing that God would send the Messiah, to be a prince, and a Saviour to his people, as he had promised) and the faith of those since his time (believing Jesus to be that Messiah, promised and sent by God) shall be accounted to them for righteousness; yet what shall become of all the rest of mankind, who having never heard of the promise or news of a Saviour, not a word of a Messiah to be sent, or that was come, have had no thought or belief concerning him?

163. To this I answer, that God will require of every man according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not. He will not expect ten talents where he gave but one; nor require any

one should believe a promise of which he has never heard. The apostle's reasoning, Rom. x. 14, is very just: 'How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?' But though there be many who, being strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, were also strangers to the oracles of God committed to that people; many, to whom the promise of the Messiah never came, and so were never in a capacity to believe or reject that revelation; yet God had, by the light of reason, revealed to all mankind, who would make use of that light, that he was good and merciful. The same spark of the divine nature and knowledge in man, which, making him a man, showed him the law he was under as a man, showed him also the way of atoning the merciful, kind, compassionate Author and Father of him and his being, when he had transgressed that law. He that made use of this candle of the Lord, so far as to find what was his duty, could not miss to find also the way to reconciliation and forgiveness, when he had failed of his duty; though, if he used not his reason this way, if he put out, or neglected this light, he might, perhaps, see neither.

164. The law is the eternal, immutable standard of right. And a part of that law is, that a man should forgive, not only his children, but his enemies, upon their repentance, asking pardon and amendment; and therefore he could not doubt that the author of this law, and God of patience and consolation, who is rich in mercy, would forgive his frail offspring, if they acknowledged their faults, disapproved the iniquity of their transgressions, begged his pardon, and resolved in earnest

for the future to conform their actions to this rule, which they owned to be just and right. This way of reconciliation, this hope of atonement, the light of nature revealed to them. And the revelation of the gospel having said nothing to the contrary, leaves them to stand and fall to their own Father, and Master, whose goodness and mercy is over all his works. I know some are forward to urge that place of the Acts, chap. iv., as contrary to this. The words, verses 10 and 12, stand thus: 'Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man [that is, the lame man restored by Peter] stand here before you whole. This is the stone which is set at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, in which we must be saved.' Which, in short, is, that Jesus is the only true Messiah; neither is there any other person but he given to be a mediator between God and man, in whose name we may ask and hope for salvation.

165. It will here possibly be asked, *Quorsum perditio hæc?* What need was there of a Saviour? What advantage have we by Jesus Christ? It is enough to justify the fitness of any thing to be done, by resolving it into the wisdom of God, who has done it, though our short views and narrow understandings may utterly incapacitate us to see that wisdom, and to judge rightly of it. We know little of this visible, and nothing at all of the state

of that intellectual world, wherein are infinite numbers and degrees of spirits, out of the reach of our ken or guess; and therefore know not what transactions there were between God and our Saviour, in reference to his kingdom. We know not what need there was to set up a head and a chieftain, in opposition to 'the prince of this world, the prince of the power of the air,' &c. whereof there are more than obscure intimations in Scripture; and we shall take too much upon us, if we shall call God's wisdom or providence to account, and pertly condemn for needless, all that our weak and, perhaps, biassed understandings cannot account for.

166. Though this general answer be reply enough to the forementioned demand, and such as a rational man, or fair searcher after truth, will acquiesce in; yet in this particular case, the wisdom and goodness of God has shown itself so visibly to common apprehensions, that it hath furnished us abundantly wherewithal to satisfy the curious and inquisitive; who will not take a blessing, unless they be instructed what need they had of it, and why it was bestowed upon them. The great and many advantages we receive by the coming of Jesus the Messiah, will show that it was not without need that he was sent into the world. The evidence of our Saviour's mission from heaven is so great, in the multitude of miracles he did before all sorts of people, that what he delivered cannot but be received as the oracles of God, and unquestionable verity; for the miracles he did were so ordered by the divine Provi-

dence and wisdom, that they never were, nor could be denied by any of the enemies or opposers of Christianity.

167. Though the works of nature, in every part of them, sufficiently evidence a Deity, yet the world made so little use of their reason, that they saw him not, where even by the impressions of himself he was easy to be found. Sense and lust blinded their minds in some, and a careless inadvertency in others, and fearful apprehensions in most, (who either believed there were, or could not but suspect there might be superior unknown beings,) gave them up into the hands of their priests, to fill their heads with false notions of the Deity, and their worship with foolish rites, as they pleased; and what dread or craft once began, devotion soon made sacred, and religion immutable. In this state of darkness and ignorance of the true God, vice and superstition held the world; nor could any help be had or hoped for from reason, which could not be heard, and was judged to have nothing to do in the case; the priests everywhere, to secure their empire, having excluded reason[1] from having any thing to do in religion. And in the crowd of

[1] But by false pretenders to religion *reason* is still in a great measure proscribed. The sketch that follows of paganism is scarcely correct: in many countries of antiquity the priests gained very little by their false religion which they might not have gained by the true one. Priests, moreover, were far less numerous in antiquity than in modern times, and their gains were infinitely smaller. The religion they taught, also, was better than none; and, though it is customary to abuse priests, perhaps, if we would be just, we should acknowledge that, even in pagan times, there was considerable utility in their establishments, which kept alive, in many places, the flame of piety, and was always more or less favourable to virtue.—Ed.

wrong notions, and invented rites, the world had almost lost the sight of the one only true God. The rational and thinking part of mankind, it is true, when they sought after him, found the one, supreme, invisible God; but if they acknowledged and worshipped him, it was only in their own minds. They kept this truth locked up in their own breasts as a secret, nor ever durst venture it amongst the people, much less the priests, those wary guardians of their own creeds and profitable inventions. Hence we see that reason, speaking never so clearly to the wise and virtuous, had never authority enough to prevail on the multitude, and to persuade the societies of men that there was but one God, that alone was to be owned and worshipped. The belief and worship of one God was the national religion of the Israelites alone; and, if we will consider it, it was introduced and supported amongst that people by revelation. They were in Goshen, and had light, whilst the rest of the world were in almost Egyptian darkness, without God in the world. There was no part of mankind who had quicker parts, or improved them more; that had a greater light of reason, or followed it further in all sorts of speculations, than the Athenians; and yet we find but one Socrates amongst them, that opposed and laughed at their polytheisms and wrong opinions of the Deity; and we see how they rewarded him for it.[1] Whatsoever

[1] Nevertheless, among the Greek philosophers, the unity of God was clearly enough expressed in their writings; and it is supposed, with considerable probability, that this was the true secret revealed in the mysteries, the knowledge of which was supposed to secure happiness in a future state. Aristophan. Ειρηνη, 375. Βατραχ. 454. et Brunck. ad loc.

Plato and the soberest of the philosophers thought of the nature and being of the one God, they were fain, in their outward worship, to go with the herd, and to keep to the religion established by law; which what it was, and how it had disposed the mind of these knowing and quick-sighted Grecians, St. Paul tells us, Acts, xviii.: 'Ye men of Athens,' says he, 'I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious: for as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To the unknown God. Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth unto all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all the nations of men, for to dwell on the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel him out, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.' Here he tells the Athenians, that they and the rest of the world (given up to superstition) whatever light there was, in the works of creation and providence, to lead them to the true God, yet they few of them found him. He was everywhere near them; yet they were but like people groping and feeling for something in the dark, and did not see him with a full clear daylight; 'but thought the godhead like to gold, and silver, and stone, graven by art and man's device.'

168. In this state of darkness and error in re-

ference to the true God, our Saviour found the world. But the clear revelation he brought with him, dissipated this darkness; made the one invisible true God known to the world; and that with such evidence and energy, that polytheism and idolatry hath nowhere been able to withstand it. But wherever the preaching of the truth be delivered, and the light of the gospel hath come, those mists have been dispelled; and, in effect, we see that, since our Saviour's time, the belief of one God has prevailed and spread itself over the face of the earth. For even to the light that the Messiah brought into the world with him, we must ascribe the owning and profession of one God, which the Mahometan religion hath derived and borrowed from it. So that, in this sense, it is certainly and manifestly true of our Saviour, what St. John says of him, 1 John, iii. 8: 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.' This light the world needed, and this light it received from him—that there is but one God, and he eternal, invisible; not like to any visible objects, nor to be represented by them.

169. If it be asked, whether the revelation to the patriarchs by Moses did not teach this, and why that was not enough? the answer is obvious; that however clearly the knowledge of one invisible God, maker of heaven and earth, was revealed to them, yet that revelation was shut up in a little corner of the world, amongst a people, by that very law which they received with it, excluded from a commerce and communication with the rest of mankind. The Gentile world, in our Saviour's time, and several ages before, could have no attestation

of the miracles on which the Hebrews built their faith, but from the Jews themselves; a people not known to the greatest part of mankind, contemned and thought vilely of by those nations that did know them; and therefore very unfit and unable to propagate the doctrine of one God in the world, and diffuse it through the nations of the earth, by the strength and force of that ancient revelation, upon which they had received it. But our Saviour, when he came, threw down this wall of partition, and did not confine his miracles or message to the land of Canaan, or the worshippers at Jerusalem; but he himself preached at Samaria, and did miracles in the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and before multitudes of people gathered from all quarters. And after his resurrection sent his apostles amongst the nations, accompanied with miracles, which were done in all parts so frequently, and before so many witnesses of all sorts, in broad daylight, that, as I have before observed, the enemies of Christianity have never dared to deny them; no, not Julian himself, who neither wanted skill nor power to inquire into the truth, nor would have failed to have proclaimed and exposed it, if he could have detected any falsehood in the history of the gospel, or found the least ground to question the matter of fact published of Christ and his apostles. The number and evidence of the miracles done by our Saviour and his followers, by the power and force of truth, bore down this mighty and accomplished emperor, and all his parts, in his own dominions. He durst not deny so plain matter of fact; which being granted, the truth of our Saviour's doctrine and mission unavoidably follows, notwithstanding whatsoever artful suggestions his

wit could invent, or malice should offer to the contrary.

170. 2. Next to the knowledge of one God, maker of all things, a clear knowledge of their duty was wanting to mankind. This part of knowledge, though cultivated with some care, by some of the heathen philosophers, yet got little footing among the people. All men indeed, under pain of displeasing the gods, were to frequent the temples; every one went to their sacrifices and services; but the priests made it not their business to teach them virtue. If they were diligent in their observations and ceremonies, punctual in their feasts and solemnities, and the tricks of religion, the holy tribe assured them, the gods were pleased; and they looked no further. Few went to the schools of the philosophers, to be instructed in their duties, and to know what was good and evil in their actions. The priests sold the better pennyworths, and therefore had all their custom. Lustrations and processions were much easier than a clean conscience, and a steady course of virtue; and an expiatory sacrifice, that atoned for the want of it, was much more convenient than a strict and holy life. No wonder, then, that religion was everywhere distinguished from, and preferred to virtue, and that it was dangerous heresy and profaneness to think the contrary. So much virtue as was necessary to hold societies together, and to contribute to the quiet of governments, the civil laws of commonwealths taught, and forced upon men that lived under magistrates: but these laws, being for the most part made by such who had no other aims but their own power, reached no further than

those things that would serve to tie men together in subjection; or, at most, were directly to conduce to the prosperity and temporal happiness of any people. But natural religion, in its full extent, was nowhere, that I know, taken care of by the force of natural reason. It should seem, by the little that has hitherto been done in it, that it is too hard a task for unassisted reason, to establish morality, in all its parts, upon its true foundations, with a clear and convincing light. And it is at least a surer and shorter way, to the apprehensions of the vulgar, and mass of mankind, that one manifestly sent from God, and coming with visible authority from him, should, as a king and law-maker, tell them their duties, and require their obedience, than leave it to the long, and sometimes intricate deductions of reason, to be made out to them: such strains of reasonings the greatest part of mankind have neither leisure to weigh, nor, for want of education and use, skill to judge of. We see how unsuccessful in this, the attempts of philosophers were, before our Saviour's time. How short their several systems came of the perfection of a true and complete morality, is very visible. And if, since that, the Christian philosophers have much outdone them, yet we may observe, that the first knowledge of the truths they have added, are owing to revelation; though, as soon as they are heard and considered, they are found to be agreeable to reason, and such as can by no means be contradicted. Every one may observe a great many truths which he receives at first from others, and readily assents to as consonant to reason, which he would have found it hard, and perhaps, beyond his strength to have discovered himself.

Native and original truth is not so easily wrought out of the mine, as we, who have it delivered ready dug and fashioned into our hands, are apt to imagine. And how often at fifty or threescore years old, are thinking men told what they wonder how they could miss thinking of? which yet their own contemplations did not, and possibly never would have helped them to. Experience shows that the knowledge of morality, by mere natural light, (how agreeable soever it be to it,) makes but a slow progress, and little advance in the world: and the reason of it is not hard to be found in men's necessities, passions, vices, and mistaken interests, which turn their thoughts another way:— and the designing leaders, as well as the following herd, find it not to their purpose to employ much of their meditations this way:—or whatever else was the cause, it is plain, in fact, that human reason unassisted, failed men in its great and proper business of morality. It never, from unquestionable principles, by clear deductions, made out an entire body of the law of nature. And he that shall collect all the moral rules of the philosophers, and compare them with those contained in the New Testament, will find them to come short of the morality delivered by our Saviour, and taught by his apostles: a college made up, for the most part, of ignorant but inspired fishermen.

171. Though yet, if any one should think that, out of the sayings of the wise heathens, before our Saviour's time, there might be a collection made of all those rules of morality, which are to be found in the Christian religion; yet this would not at all hinder, but that the world nevertheless stood as

much in need of our Saviour, and the morality delivered by him. Let it be granted (though not true) that all the moral precepts of the gospel were known by somebody or other, amongst mankind, before.¶ But where, or how, or of what use, is not considered. Suppose they may be picked up here and there; some from Solon and Bias in Greece; others from Tully in Italy; and, to complete the work, let Confucius, as far as China, be consulted; and Anacharsis the Scythian contribute his share. What will all this do to give the world a complete morality, that may be to mankind the unquestionable rule of life and manners? I will not here urge the impossibility of collecting from men so far distant from one another, in time, and place, and languages. I will suppose there was a Stobæus in those times, who had gathered the moral sayings from all the sages of the world. What would this amount to, towards being a steady rule, a certain transcript of a law that we are under? Did the saying of Aristippus or Confucius give it an authority? Was Zeno a lawgiver to mankind? If not, what he or any other philosopher delivered was but a saying of his. Mankind might hearken to it or reject it, as they pleased, or as it suited their interest, passions, principles, or humours: they were under no obligation; the opinion of this or that philosopher was of no authority: and if it were, you must take all he said under the same character. All his dictates must go for law, certain and true, or none of them. And then, if you will take any of the moral sayings of Epicurus (many whereof Seneca quotes, with esteem and approbation) for precepts of the law of nature, you must take all

the rest of his doctrine for such too, or else his authority ceases; and so no more is to be received from him, or any of the sages of old, for parts of the law of nature, as carrying with it an obligation to be obeyed but what they prove to be so. But such a body of ethics, proved to be the law of nature from principles of reason, and reaching all the duties of life, I think nobody will say the world had before our Saviour's time. It is not enough that there were, up and down, scattered sayings of wise men, conformable to right reason. The law of nature was the law of convenience too; and it is no wonder that those men of parts, and studious of virtue, (who had occasion to think on any particular part of it,) should by meditation light on the right, even from the observable convenience and beauty of it, without making out its obligation from the true principles of the law of nature, and foundations of morality. But these incoherent apophthegms of philosophers and wise men, however excellent in themselves, and well intended by them, could never make a morality, whereof the world could be convinced; could never rise to the force of a law that mankind could with certainty depend on. Whatsoever should thus be universally useful, as a standard to which men should conform their manners, must have its authority either from reason or revelation. It is not every writer of morals, or compiler of it from others, that can thereby be erected into a lawgiver to mankind; and a dictator of rules, which are therefore valid, because they are to be found in his books, under the authority of this or that philosopher. He that any one will pretend to set up in this kind, and have his rules pass for authentic directions, must show, that

either he builds his doctrine upon principles of reason, self-evident in themselves, and that he deduces all the parts of it from thence, by clear and evident demonstration; or, must show his commission from heaven, that he comes with authority from God, to deliver his will and commands to the world. In the former way, nobody that I know, before our Saviour's time, ever did, or went about to give us a morality. It is true there is a law of nature: but who is there that ever did, or undertook to give it us all entire, as a law; no more nor no less than what was contained in, and had the obligation of that law? Who ever made out all the parts of it, put them together, and showed the world their obligation? Where was there any such code, that mankind might have recourse to, as their unerring rule, before our Saviour's time? If there was not, it is plain, there was need of one to give us such a morality; such a law, which might be the sure guide of those who had a desire to go right; and, if they had a mind, need not mistake their duty; but might be certain when they had performed, when failed in it. Such a law of morality Jesus Christ hath given us in the New Testament; but by the latter of these ways, by revelation. We have from him a full and sufficient rule for our direction, and conformable to that of reason. But the truth and obligation of its precepts have their force, and are put past doubt to us, by the evidence of his mission. He was sent by God: his miracles show it; and the authority of God in his precepts cannot be questioned. Here morality has a sure standard, that revelation vouches, and reason cannot gainsay, nor question; but both together witness to come from God, the great law-

maker. And such a one as this out of the New Testament I think the world never had, nor can any one say is anywhere else to be found. Let me ask any one, who is forward to think that the doctrine of morality was full and clear in the world at our Saviour's birth, whither would he have directed Brutus and Cassius (both men of parts and virtue; the one whereof believed, and the other disbelieved a future being) to be satisfied in the rules and obligations of all the parts of their duties, if they should have asked him where they might find the law they were to live by, and by which they should be charged or acquitted, as guilty or innocent? If to the sayings of the wise, and the declarations of philosophers, he sends them into a wild wood of uncertainty, to an endless maze, from which they should never get out: if to the religions of the world, yet worse: and if to their own reason, he refers them to that which had some light and certainty; but yet had hitherto failed all mankind in a perfect rule; and we see, resolved not the doubts that had risen amongst the studious and thinking philosophers; nor had yet been able to convince the civilized parts of the world, that they had not given, nor could, without a crime, take away the lives of their children, by exposing them.

172. If any one should think to excuse human nature, by laying blame on men's negligence, that they did not carry morality to an higher pitch, and make it out entire in every part, with that clearness of demonstration which some think it capable of, he helps not the matter. Be the cause what it will, our Saviour found mankind under a corruption

of manners and principles, which ages after ages had prevailed, and must be confessed was not in a way or tendency to be mended. The rules of morality were, in different countries and sects, different. And natural reason nowhere had, nor was like to cure the defects and errors in them. Those just measures of right and wrong, which necessity had anywhere introduced; the civil laws prescribed, or philosophy recommended, stood not on their true foundations. They were looked on as bonds of society, and conveniences of common life, and laudable practices. But where was it that their obligation was thoroughly known and allowed, and they received as precepts of a law of the highest law, the law of nature? That could not be without a clear knowledge and acknowledgment of the law-maker, and the great rewards and punishments for those that would or would not obey him. But the religion of the heathens, as was before observed, little concerned itself in their morals. The priests that delivered the oracles of heaven, and pretended to speak from the god, spoke little of virtue and a good life. And, on the other side, the philosophers who spoke from reason, made not much mention of the deity in their ethics. They depended on reason and her oracles, which contain nothing but truth: but yet some parts of that truth lie too deep for our natural powers easily to reach, and make plain and visible to mankind, without some light from above to direct them. When truths are once known to us, though by tradition, we are apt to be favourable to our own parts, and ascribe to our own understandings the discovery of what, in reality, we borrowed from others; or, at least, finding we can prove what at first we learned from

others, we are forward to conclude it an obvious truth, which, if we had sought, we could not have missed. Nothing seems hard to our understandings that is once known: and because what we see, we see with our own eyes, we are apt to overlook or forget the help we had from others, who showed it us, and first made us see it; as if we were not at all beholden to them for those truths they opened the way to, and led us into: for knowledge being only of truths that are perceived to be so, we are favourable enough to our own faculties to conclude that they, of their own strength, would have attained those discoveries without any foreign assistance; and that we know those truths by the strength and native light of our own minds, as they did from whom we received them by theirs, only they had the luck to be before us. Thus the whole stock of human knowledge is claimed by every one as his private possession, as soon as he (profiting by others' discoveries,) has got it into his own mind: and so it is; but not properly by his own single industry, nor of his own acquisition. He studies, it is true, and takes pains to make a progress in what others have delivered; but their pains were of another sort, who first brought those truths to light, which he afterwards derives from them. He that travels the roads now, applauds his own strength and legs that have carried him so far in such a scantling of time, and ascribes all to his own vigour, little considering how much he owes to their pains, who cleared the woods, drained the bogs, built the bridges, and made the ways passable; without which he might have toiled much with little progress. A great many things which we have been bred up in the belief of, from

our cradles, and are notions grown familiar, (and, as it were, natural to us, under the gospel,) we take for unquestionable obvious truths, and easily demonstrable; without considering how long we might have been in doubt or ignorance of them, had revelation been silent. And many are beholden to revelation who do not acknowledge it. It is no diminishing to revelation, that reason gives its suffrage too, to the truths revelation has discovered. But it is our mistake to think, that because reason confirms them to us, we had the first certain knowledge of them from thence, and in that clear evidence we now possess of them. The contrary is manifest, in the defective morality of the Gentiles before our Saviour's time, and the want of reformation in the principles and measures of it, as well as practice. Philosophy seemed to have spent its strength, and done its utmost; or if it should have gone further, as we see it did not, and from undeniable principles given us ethics in a science like mathematics, in every part demonstrable, this yet would not have been so effectual to man in this imperfect state, nor proper for the cure. The greatest part of mankind want leisure or capacity for demonstration, nor can carry a train of proofs, which in that way they must always depend upon for conviction, and cannot be required to assent to till they see the demonstration. Wherever they stick, the teachers are always put upon proof, and must clear the doubt, by a thread of coherent deductions from the first principle, how long, or how intricate soever that be. And you may as soon hope to have all the day-labourers and tradesmen, the spinsters and dairy-maids, perfect mathematicians, as to have them

perfect in ethics this way: hearing plain commands is the sure and only course to bring them to obedience and practice; the greatest part cannot know, and therefore they must believe. And I ask, whether one coming from heaven in the power of God, in full and clear evidence and demonstration of miracles, giving plain and direct rules of morality and obedience, be not likelier to enlighten the bulk of mankind, and set them right in their duties, and bring them to do them, than by reasoning with them from general notions and principles of human reason? And were all the duties of human life clearly demonstrated, yet I conclude, when well considered, that method of teaching men their duties would be thought proper only for a few, who had much leisure, improved understandings, and were used to abstract reasonings; but the instruction of the people were best still to be left to the precepts and principles of the gospel. The healing of the sick, the restoring sight to the blind by a word, the raising, and being raised from the dead, are matters of fact, which they can without difficulty conceive; and that he who does such things, must do them by the assistance of a divine power. These things lie level to the ordinariest apprehension: he that can distinguish between sick and well, lame and sound, dead and alive, is capable of this doctrine. To one who is once persuaded that Jesus Christ was sent by God to be a king, and a Saviour of those who do believe in him, all his commands become principles; there needs no other proof for the truth of what he says, but that he said it: and then there needs no more but to read the inspired books to be instructed; all the duties of morality lie there clear and plain,

and easy to be understood. And here I appeal, whether this be not the surest, the safest, and most effectual way of teaching; especially if we add this further consideration, that as it suits the lowest capacities of reasonable creatures, so it reaches and satisfies, nay, enlightens the highest. The most elevated understandings cannot but submit to the authority of this doctrine as divine; which coming from the mouths of a company of illiterate men, hath not only the attestation of miracles, but reason to confirm it, since they delivered no precepts but such as, though reason of itself had not clearly made out, yet it could not but assent to when thus discovered, and think itself indebted for the discovery. The credit and authority our Saviour and his apostles had over the minds of men, by the miracles they did, tempted them not to mix (as we find in that of all the sects of philosophers, and other religions) any conceits, any wrong rules, any thing tending to their own by-interest, or that of a party, in their morality: no tang of prepossession or fancy; no footsteps of pride or vanity; no touch of ostentation or ambition appears to have a hand in it: it is all pure, all sincere; nothing too much, nothing wanting: but such a complete rule of life, as the wisest men must acknowledge, tends entirely to the good of mankind; and that all would be happy, if all would practise it.

173. 3. The outward forms of worshipping the Deity wanted a reformation: stately buildings, costly ornaments, peculiar and uncouth habits, and a numerous huddle of pompous, fantastical, cumbersome ceremonies, everywhere attended di-

vine worship. This, as it had the peculiar name, so it was thought the principal part, if not the whole of religion; nor could this possibly be amended whilst the Jewish ritual stood, and there was so much of it mixed with the worship of the true God. To this also our Saviour, with the knowledge of the infinite, invisible, supreme Spirit, brought a remedy, in a plain, spiritual, and suitable worship. Jesus says to the woman of Samaria: 'The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father: but the true worshippers, shall worship the Father both in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship.' To be worshipped in spirit and in truth, with application of mind and sincerity of heart, was what God henceforth only required. Magnificent temples, and confinement to certain places, were now no longer necessary for his worship, which by a pure heart might be performed anywhere. The splendour and distinction of habits, and pomp of ceremonies and all outside performances, might now be spared. God, who was a spirit, and made known to be so, required none of those, but the spirit only; and that in public assemblies, (where some actions must lie open to the view of the world,) all that could appear and be seen, should be done decently, and in order, and to edification. Decency, order, and edification were to regulate all their public acts of worship; and beyond what these required, the outward appearance (which was of little value in the eyes of God) was not to go. Having shut out indecency and confusion out of their assemblies, they need not be solicitous about useless ceremonies: praises and prayer humbly offered up to the

Deity, was the worship he now demanded; and in these every one was to look after his own heart, and know that it was that alone which God had regard to, and accepted.

174. 4. Another great advantage received by our Saviour, is the great encouragement he brought to a virtuous and a pious life; great enough to surmount the difficulties and obstacles that lie in the way to it, and reward the pains and hardships of those who stuck firm to their duties, and suffered for the testimony of a good conscience. The portion of the righteous has been in all ages taken notice of to be pretty scanty in this world: virtue and prosperity do not often accompany one another, and therefore virtue seldom had many followers; and it is no wonder she prevailed not much in a state, where the inconveniences that attended her were visible and at hand, and the rewards doubtful and at a distance. Mankind, who are and must be allowed to pursue their happiness, nay, cannot be hindered, could not but think themselves excused from a strict observation of rules, which appeared so little to consist with their chief end—happiness, whilst they kept them from the enjoyments of this life; and they had little evidence and security of another.'[1] It is true, they might have argued the other way, and concluded, that, because the good were most of them ill-

[1] This is unjust to the philosophers. The immortality of the soul was as firmly believed then as it is now; and the same virtues were supposed to secure happiness in a future state. With the knowledge Locke possessed of antiquity, I can hardly conceive how he could write this passage, which is in contradiction with what remains to us of genuine ancient philosophy. —Ed.

treated here, there was another place where they should meet with better usage; but it is plain they did not. Their thoughts of another life were, at best, obscure, and their expectations uncertain. Of manes, and ghosts, and the shades of departed men, there was some talk; but little certain, and less minded. They had the names of Styx and Acheron, of Elysian Fields and seats of the blessed; but they had them generally from their poets, mixed with their fables, and so they looked more like the inventions of wit and ornaments of poetry than the serious persuasions of the grave and the sober. They came to them bundled up amongst their tales; and for tales they took them. And that which rendered them more suspected, and less useful to virtue, was, that the philosophers seldom set on their rules on men's minds and practices by consideration of another life. The chief of their arguments were from the excellency of virtue; and the highest they generally went, was the exalting of human nature, whose perfection lay in virtue. And if the priest at any time talked of the ghosts below, and a life after this, it was only to keep men to their superstitious and idolatrous rites, whereby the use of this doctrine was lost to the credulous multitude, and its belief to the quicker sighted, who suspected it presently of priestcraft. Before our Saviour's time, the doctrine of a future state, though it were not wholly hid, yet it was not clearly known in the world. It was an imperfect view of reason; or, perhaps, the decayed remains of an ancient tradition, which rather seemed to float on men's fancies, than sink deep into their hearts. It was something, they knew not what, between being and not being. Something in man

they imagined might escape the grave; but a perfect complete life of an eternal duration, after this, was what entered little into their thoughts, and less into their persuasions. And they were so far from being clear herein, that we see no nation of the world publicly professed it, and built upon it; no religion taught it; and it was nowhere made an article of faith and principle of religion till Jesus Christ came: of whom it is truly said, that he at his appearing 'brought life and immortality to light.' And that not only in the clear revelation of it, and in instances shown of men raised from the dead, but he has given us an unquestionable assurance and pledge of it in his own resurrection and ascension into heaven. How hath this one truth changed the nature of things in the world, and given the advantage to piety over all that could tempt or deter men from it! The philosophers, indeed, showed the beauty of virtue: they set her off so as drew men's eyes and approbation to her; but leaving her unendowed, very few were willing to espouse her. The generality could not refuse her their esteem and commendation, but still turned their backs on her, and forsook her, as a match not for their turn. But now there being put into the scales on her side, 'an exceeding and immortal weight of glory,' interest is come about to her; and virtue now is visibly the most enriching purchase and by much the best bargain. That she is the perfection and excellency of our nature; that she is herself a reward, and will recommend our names to future ages, is not all that can now be said for her. It is not strange that the learned heathens satisfied not many with such airy commendations. It has another relish and efficacy to persuade men,

that if they live well here, they shall be happy hereafter. Open their eyes upon the endless unspeakable joys of another life, and their hearts will find something solid and powerful to move them.[1] The view of heaven and hell will cast a slight upon the short pleasures and pains of this present state, and give attractions and encouragements to virtue, which reason and interest, and the care of ourselves, cannot but allow and prefer. Upon this foundation, and upon this only, morality stands firm, and may defy all competition. This makes it more than a name, a substantial good, worth all our aims and endeavours; and thus the gospel of Jesus Christ hath delivered it to us.

175. 5. To these I must add one advantage more we have by Jesus Christ, and that is, the promise of assistance. If we do what we can, he will give us his Spirit to help us to do what, and how we should. It will be idle for us, who know not how our own spirits move and act us, to ask in what manner the Spirit of God shall work upon us. The wisdom that accompanies that Spirit knows better than we how we are made, and how to work upon us. If a wise man knows how to prevail on his child, to bring him to what he desires, can we suspect that the Spirit and wisdom of God should fail

[1] In the Essay on the Human Understanding, however, he had said:—"Let a man be ever so well persuaded of the advantages of virtue, that it is as necessary to a man who has any great aims in this world, or hopes in the next, as food to life; yet, till he hungers and thirsts after righteousness, till he feels an uneasiness in the want of it, his *will* will not be determined to any action in pursuit of this confessed greater good; but any other uneasiness he feels in himself shall take place, and carry his will to other actions." Book ii. ch. 21. § 35.—Ed.

in it, though we perceive or comprehend not the ways of his operation? Christ has promised it, who is faithful and just, and we cannot doubt of the performance. It is not requisite, on this occasion, for the enhancing of this benefit, to enlarge on the frailty of minds, and weakness of our constitutions; how liable to mistakes, how apt to go astray, and how easily to be turned out of the paths of virtue. If any one needs go beyond himself and the testimony of his own conscience in this point; if he feels not his own errors and passions always tempting him, and often prevailing against the strict rules of his duty, he need but look abroad into any age of the world to be convinced. To a man under the difficulties of his nature, beset with temptations, and hedged in with prevailing custom, it is no small encouragement to set himself seriously on the courses of virtue, and practice of true religion, that he is, from a sure hand, and an almighty arm, promised assistance to support and carry him through.

176. There remains yet something to be said to those who will be ready to object, if the belief of Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah, together with those concomitant articles of his resurrection, rule, and coming again to judge the world, be all the faith required as necessary to justification, to what purpose were the epistles written; I say, if the belief of those many doctrines contained in them, be not also necessary to salvation? And if what is there delivered, a Christian may believe or disbelieve, and yet nevertheless be a member of Christ's church, and one of the faithful? To this I answer, that the epistles were written upon seve-

ral occasions; and he that will read them as he ought, must observe what it is in them is principally aimed at; find what is the argument in hand, and how managed, if he will understand them right, and profit by them. The observing of this will best help us to the true meaning and mind of the writer; for that is the truth which is to be received and believed, and not scattered sentences in a Scripture language, accommodated to our notions and prejudices. We must look into the drift of the discourse, observe the coherence and connexion of the parts, and see how it is consistent with itself, and other parts of Scripture, if we will conceive it right. We must not cull out, as best suits our system, here and there a period or a verse, as if they were all distinct and independent aphorisms: and make these the fundamental articles of the Christian faith, and necessary to salvation, unless God has made them so. There be many truths in the Bible, which a good Christian may be wholly ignorant of, and so not believe, which, perhaps, some lay great stress on, and call fundamental articles, because they are the distinguishing points of their communion. The epistles, most of them, carry on a thread of argument, which in the style they are written, cannot everywhere be observed without great attention. And to consider the texts, as they stand and bear a part in that, is to view them in their due light, and the way to get the true sense of them. They were written to those who were in the faith, and true Christians already; and so could not be designed to teach them the fundamental articles and points necessary to salvation: the Epistle to the Romans was written to all

'that were at Rome, beloved of God, called to be the saints, whose faith was spoken of through the world,' chapter i. 7, 8. To whom St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians was, he shows, chapter i. 2, 4, &c.: 'Unto the church of God, which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints; with all them that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours. I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by him in all utterance, and in all knowledge: even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you. So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.' And so likewise the second was, 'To the church of God at Corinth, with all the saints in Achaia,' chapter i. 1. His next is to the churches of Galatia. That to the Ephesians was, 'To the saints that were at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.' So likewise, 'To the saints and faithful brethren at Colosse, who had faith in Christ Jesus, and love to the saints.' 'To the church of the Thessalonians.' 'To Timothy, his son in the faith.' 'To Titus, his own son after the common faith.' 'To Philemon, his dearly beloved, and fellow-labourer.' And the author to the Hebrews, calls those he writes to, 'Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling,' chapter iii. 1. From whence it is evident, that all those whom St. Paul wrote to, were brethren, saints, faithful in the church, and so Christians already, and therefore wanted not the fundamental articles of the Christian religion; without a belief of which they could not be saved: nor can it be supposed, that

the sending of such fundamentals was the reason of the apostle's writing to any of them. To such also St. Peter writes, as is plain from the first chapter of each of his epistles. Nor is it hard to observe the like in St. James and St. John's epistles. And St. Jude directs his thus: 'To them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.' The epistles therefore being all written to those who were already believers and Christians, the occasion and end of writing them could not be to instruct them in that which was necessary to make them Christians. This it is plain they knew and believed already; or else they could not have been Christians and believers. And they were written upon particular occasions; and without those occasions had not been written, and so cannot be thought necessary to salvation; though they resolving doubts, and reforming mistakes, are of great advantage to our knowledge and practice. I do not deny, but the great doctrines of the Christian faith are dropped here and there, and scattered up and down in most of them. But it is not in the epistles we are to learn what are the fundamental articles of faith, where they are promiscuously, and without distinction, mixed with other truths in discourses that were (though for edification indeed, yet) only occasional. We shall find and discern those great and necessary points best in the preaching of our Saviour and the apostles, to those who were yet strangers, and ignorant of the faith, to bring them in, and convert them to it. And what that was we have seen already, out of the history of the evangelists and the Acts; where they are plainly laid down, so that nobody can mistake them. The

epistles to particular churches, besides the main argument of each of them (which was some present concernment of that particular church to which they severally were addressed) do in many places explain the fundamentals of the Christian religion; and that wisely, by proper accommodations to the apprehensions of those they were written to, the better to make them imbibe the Christian doctrine, and the more easily to comprehend the method, reasons, and grounds of the great work of salvation. Thus we see in the epistle to the Romans, adoption (a custom well known amongst those of Rome) is much made use of, to explain to them the grace and favour of God, in giving them eternal life; to help them to conceive how they became the children of God, and to assure them of a share in the kingdom of heaven, as heirs to an inheritance. Whereas the setting out, and confirming the Christian faith to the Hebrews, in the epistle to them, is by allusions and arguments, from the ceremonies, sacrifices, and economy of the Jews, and reference to the records of the Old Testament. And as for the general epistles, they, we may see, regard the state and exigencies, and some peculiarities of those times. These holy writers, inspired from above, wrote nothing but truth, and in most places very weighty truths to us now; for the expounding, clearing, and confirming of the Christian doctrine, and establishing those in it who had embraced it. But yet every sentence of theirs must not be taken up and looked on as a fundamental article, necessary to salvation; without an explicit belief whereof nobody could be a member of Christ's church here, nor be admitted into his eternal kingdom hereafter. If all, or most of the truths declared in the epistles, were to be received and believed as fundamental

articles, what then became of those Christians who were fallen asleep (as St. Paul witnesses in his first epistle to the Corinthians, many were) before these things in the epistles were revealed to them? Most of the epistles not being written till above twenty years after our Saviour's ascension, and some after thirty.

177. But further, therefore, to those who will be ready to say, may those truths delivered in the epistles, which are not contained in the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles, and are therefore by this account not necessary to salvation, be believed or disbelieved without any danger? May a Christian safely question or doubt of them? To this I answer, that the law of faith, being a covenant of free grace, God alone can appoint what shall be necessarily believed by every one whom he will justify. What is the faith which he will accept and account for righteousness, depends wholly on his good pleasure; for it is of grace, and not of right, that this faith is accepted. And therefore he alone can set the measures of it; and what he has so appointed and declared is alone necessary. Nobody can add to these fundamental articles of faith, nor make any other necessary, but what God himself hath made and declared to be so. And what these are which God requires of those who will enter into, and receive the benefits of the new covenant, has already been shown. An explicit belief of these, is absolutely required of all those to whom the gospel of Jesus Christ is preached, and salvation through his name proposed.

178. The other parts of divine revelation are objects of faith, and are so to be received. They

are truths, whereof no one can be rejected; none that is once known to be such, may or ought to be disbelieved; for to acknowledge any proposition to be of divine revelation and authority, and yet to deny or disbelieve it, is to offend against this fundamental article and ground of faith, that God is true. But yet a great many of the truths revealed in the gospel, every one does, and must confess a man may be ignorant of, nay, disbelieve, without danger to his salvation; as is evident in those who, allowing the authority, differ in the interpretation and meaning of several texts of Scripture, not thought fundamental: in all which it is plain the contending parties, on one side or the other, are ignorant of, nay, disbelieve the truths delivered in Holy Writ, unless contrarieties and contradictions can be contained in the same words, and divine revelation can mean contrary to itself.

179. Though all divine revelation requires the obedience of faith, yet every truth of inspired Scriptures is not one of those, that by the law of faith is required to be explicitly believed to justification. What those are we have seen by what our Saviour and his apostles proposed to and required in those whom they converted to the faith. Those are fundamentals, which it is not enough not to disbelieve, every one is required actually to assent to them. But any other proposition contained in the Scripture, which God has not thus made a necessary part of the law of faith (without an actual assent to which he will not allow any one to be a believer,) a man may be ignorant of, without hazarding his salvation by a defect in his faith. He believes all that God has made necessary for

him to believe and assent to; and as for the rest of divine truths, there is nothing more required of him, but that he receive all the parts of divine revelation, with a docility and disposition prepared to embrace, and assent to all truths coming from God, and submit his mind to whatsoever shall appear to him to bear that character. Where he, upon fair endeavours understands it not, how can he avoid being ignorant? And where he cannot put several texts, and make them consist together, what remedy? He must either interpret one by the other, or suspend his opinion. He that thinks that more is, or can be required, of poor frail man in matters of faith, will do well to consider what absurdities he will run into. God, out of the infiniteness of his mercy, has dealt with man as a compassionate and tender father. He gave him reason and with it a law, that could not be otherwise than what reason should dictate, unless we should think that a reasonable creature should have an unreasonable law. But considering the frailty of man, apt to run into corruption and misery, he promised a deliverer, whom in his good time he sent; and then declared to all mankind, that whoever would believe him to be the Saviour promised, and take him now raised from the dead, and constituted the Lord and Judge of all men, to be their king and ruler, should be saved. This is a plain intelligible proposition; and the all-merciful God seems herein to have consulted the poor of this world, and the bulk of mankind. These are articles that the labouring and illiterate man may comprehend. This is a religion suited to vulgar capacities, and the state of mankind in this world, destined to labour and travail. The writers and wranglers in

religion fill it with niceties, and dress it up with notions, which they make necessary and fundamental parts of it; as if there were no way into the church but through the Academy or Lycæum. The greatest part of mankind have not leisure for learning and logic, and superfine distinctions of the schools. Where the hand is used to the plough and the spade, the head is seldom elevated to sublime notions, or exercised in mysterious reasonings. It is well if men of that rank (to say nothing of the other sex) can comprehend plain propositions, and a short reasoning about things familiar to their minds, and nearly allied to their daily experience. Go beyond this, and you amaze the greatest part of mankind; and may as well talk Arabic to a poor day-labourer, as the notions and language that the books and disputes of religion are filled with, and as soon you will be understood. The dissenting congregations are supposed by their teachers to be more accurately instructed in matters of faith, and better to understand the Christian religion, than the vulgar conformists, who are charged with great ignorance; how truly I will not here determine. But I ask them to tell me seriously, whether half their people have leisure to study? Nay, whether one in ten of those who come to their meetings in the country, if they had time to study, do or can understand the controversies at this time so warmly managed amongst them, about justification, the subject of this present treatise? I have talked with some of their teachers, who confess themselves not to understand the difference in debate between them; and yet the points they stand on, are reckoned of so great weight, so material, so fundamental in religion, that they divide commu-

nion and separate upon them. Had God intended that none but the learned scribe, the disputer or wise of this world, should be Christians, or be saved; thus religion should have been prepared for them, filled with speculations and niceties, obscure terms, and abstract notions. But men of that expectation, men furnished with such acquisitions, the apostle tells us,[1] are rather shut out from the simplicity of the gospel, to make way for those poor, ignorant, illiterate, who heard and believed the promises of a deliverer, and believed Jesus to be him; who could conceive a man dead and made alive again, and, believe that he should, at the end of the world, come again, and pass sentence on all men, according to their deeds. That the poor had the gospel preached to them, Christ makes a mark as well as business, of his mission:[2] and, if the poor had the gospel preached to them, it was, without doubt, such a gospel as the poor could understand—plain and intelligible: and so it was, as we have seen, in the preachings of Christ and his apostles.

[1] 1 Cor. i. [2] Matt. xi. 5.

APPENDIX.

AN ANALYSIS

OF THE

FIRST AND SECOND VINDICATIONS.

APPENDIX.

THE "Reasonableness of Christianity, as delivered in the Scriptures," had not long appeared, before it was attacked by the Rev. Mr. Edwards, in a work entitled "Some Thoughts on the Causes and Occasions of Atheism, especially in the present Age." Locke would, perhaps, have acted more wisely had he altogether declined entering into a controversy; or, like Newton, committed the defence of his doctrines to his friends. But such indifference was inconsistent with his character. He accordingly, in a "Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity," replied to the charges which had been brought against him, and by farther developments and illustrations of his opinions, sought to guard them against future misrepresentation. His antagonist, however, was too much flattered by being regarded as the opponent of so great a man, readily to relinquish such an advantage; and therefore continued his animadversions in a more taunting and indecent style, in his "Socinianism Unmasked," and "Socinian Creed." He was one of those polemics who mistake abusive language for argument, and cannot sufficiently show their zeal without entirely emancipating themselves from the restraints of good breeding and civility. He could think of no terms too opprobrious to be heaped upon Locke. The spirit of

Christianity he altogether lost sight of, while contending for his own interpretation of some of its mysteries; and we wish we could with truth and candour say, that the author of the "Essay on the Human Understanding" had, on this occasion, left posterity a better example. It is, indeed, greatly to be regretted that neither the suggestions of philosophy, nor the example of Him who, when railed at, railed not again, should have kept Locke, in his Second Vindication, within the limits of politeness and Christian charity. His superior understanding, which enabled him, both in speculation and practice, to discern what was right, might certainly have been expected to prove a safeguard against this besetting sin of controversialists. Even paganism affords patterns of such forbearance. Socrates, when attacked by the Sophists, who, at the same time, were labouring to undermine all law, justice, and religion, exhibited neither bitterness nor anger. He listened to the most galling accusations with calmness. He smilingly submitted to revilings and taunts: and, as we learn from the Gorgias,—the most admirable model, perhaps, existing, of the manner in which controversy should be conducted,—when brought into personal contact with his opponents, and sought to be irritated by insolent assumption of superiority and affected disdain, defended himself, like a perfect gentleman, with the weapons of calm reason and irony. But Locke was by nature passionate, and vented his anger in language unbecoming his character and his cause. For this reason, were not their prolixity a sufficient objection, we should scruple to append the two Vindications to the "Reasonableness of Christianity," though we shall endeavour, by the help of extracts, to convey some idea of the objections and replies.

Mr. Edwards, with reckless disregard of all that is due from one Christian to another, charges Locke with being an Atheist,[1] or a favourer of Atheism, or a Socinian, which, in his view of the matter, is much the same thing; and, to show how lightly he deals about his accusations, places in the same category, Jeremy Taylor and the author of the "Naked Truth." By what rules of logic he identifies Socinianism with Atheism is left to the acumen of the ingenious reader; but in the charge of Socinianism he is positive, and thus he maintains it:—"When he (Locke) proceeds to mention the advantages and benefits of Christ's coming into the world, and appearing in the flesh, he hath not one syllable of his satisfying for us, or by his death purchasing life or salvation, or any thing that sounds like it. This and several other things show that he is all over Socinianized."

In reply to this, Locke adduces, from his book, the following passages:—"From this estate of death Jesus Christ restores all mankind to life;" and a little farther, "The life which Jesus Christ restores to all men;" and, again, "He that hath incurred death for

[1] Dr. Knox, with many others, classes Locke among the most celebrated defenders of Christianity, though he does not think much good has been derived from any works of this kind:—"Let those," says he, "who think the dry argumentative apologies irresistibly convincing, now bring them forward, and silence the gainsayers at once. The Demonstrations of a Huet; the Evidencies of a Clarke; the Reasonings of a Locke, a Grotius, a Hartley, should be presented in the most striking manner, by public authority; and if they are really efficacious in producing conviction, we may be assured that infidelity will vanish at their appearance, like the mists of an autumnal morning, when the meridian sun breaks forth in full splendour. But the truth is, they are already very much diffused; and yet the Christian religion is said to be rapidly on the decline."—Christian Philosophy, p. 11, 12.

his own transgression, cannot lay down his life for another, as our Saviour promises he did." He then proceeds:—"But what will become of me, that I have not mentioned satisfaction! . . . Possibly this reverend gentleman would have had charity enough for a known writer of the brotherhood, to have found it by an innuendo in those words above quoted, of laying down his life for another. . . . But what if the author designed his treatise, as the title shows, chiefly for those who were not yet thoroughly or firmly Christians; proposing to work on those who either wholly disbelieved, or doubted of the truth of the Christian religion. Would any one blame his prudence, if he mentioned only those advantages which all Christians are agreed in? Might he not remember and observe that command of the apostle, 'Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations,'[1] without being a Socinian? Did he amiss, that he offered to the belief of those who stood off, that, and only that, which our Saviour and his apostles preached for the reducing of the unconverted world? and would any one think he in earnest went about to persuade men to be Christians, who should use that as an argument to recommend the gospel, which he has observed men to lay hold on as an objection against it? To urge such points of controversy as necessary articles of faith, when we see our Saviour and the apostles urged them not as necessary to be believed to make men Christians, is, by our own authority, to add prejudices to prejudices, and to block up our own way to those men whom we would have access to, and prevail upon."

Another charge made by Mr. Edwards against

[1] Romans, xiv. 1.

Locke, was his forgetting, or rather wilfully omitting, some plain and obvious passages, and famous testimonies in the evangelists; namely, "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;"[1] and, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;" and, again, in the same chapter: "And the word was made flesh."[2] In his reply to this point, Locke observes that, apparently, all the sins in his book were sins of omission; though the outcry which had been raised, on its first publication, might well have persuaded the world it was designed to subvert all morality and religion. However, if omitting "plain and obvious passages," were to be considered a fault, he expresses his surprise that, since his omissions of this kind were innumerable, so very few should have been objected to him. "But," continues he, "if I have left out none of those passages or testimonies which contain what our Saviour and his apostles preached, and required assent to, to make men believers, I shall think my omissions, let them be what they will, no faults in the present case. Whatever doctrines Mr. Edwards would have to be believed, if they are such as our Saviour and his apostles required to be believed to make a man a Christian, he will be sure to find them in those preachings and 'famous testimonies' of our Saviour and his apostles, that I have quoted; and if they are not there he may rest satisfied they were not proposed by our Saviour and his apostles as necessary to be believed, to make men Christ's disciples."

He then proceeds to animadvert on Mr. Edwards' remissness, in not reprehending him, after his usual

[1] Matthew, xxviii. 19. [2] John, i. 1, 14.

manner, for omitting other texts of Scripture, no less true, and no less to be believed, than the "famous testimonies" above mentioned; particularly those texts in Matthew and Mark, on which are founded the following articles of the Apostle's Creed; viz., that Christ was born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried. "These," says he, "being articles of the Apostles' Creed, are looked upon as 'fundamental doctrines;' and one would wonder why Mr. Edwards so quietly passes by their omission, did it not appear that he was so intent on fixing his imputation of Socinianism upon me, that rather than miss that, he was content to drop the other articles of his creed. For I must observe to him, that if he had blamed me for the omission of the places last quoted out of St. Matthew, as he had as much reason as for any other, it would plainly have appeared how idle and ill-grounded his charging Socinianism on me was. But, at any rate, he was to give the book an ill name; not because it was Socinian; for he has no more reason to charge it with Socinianism for the omission he mentions, than the Apostles' Creed."

Here our philosopher imagined himself upon strong ground. But he was mistaken. For Mr. Edwards, who, like an able controversialist, could strengthen his arguments with sneers and ridicule, takes a short method with the Apostles' Creed. First, however, he indulges himself in a sarcasm or two at his adversary:—"This author of the *New Christianity*,"[1] says he, "*wisely* objects that the Apostles' Creed hath none

[1] To this charge of novelty, or of new-modelling Christianity, Locke replies:—"This new Christianity is as old as the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles, and a little older than our Unmasker's system."—Second Vindication, p. 136.

of those articles which I mention." Here with equal dexterity, Locke pretends to understand the word "wisely" in its literal acceptation, though it is used ironically for "foolishly;" and gravely answers: "If that author *wisely* objects, the Unmasker would have done well to have replied *wisely*. But for a man *wisely* to reply, it is in the first place requisite that the objection be truly and fairly set down in its full force, and not represented short, and as will best serve the answerer's turn to reply to. This is neither wise nor honest: and this first part of a *wise* reply the Unmasker has failed in."

He then once more shelters himself behind the Apostles' Creed; upon which Mr. Edwards observes: —"Nor does any considerate man wonder at it;"— that is, that the creed should contain none of those articles and doctrines he had mentioned; for the creed is a form of outward profession, which is chiefly to be made in the public assemblies, when prayers are put up in the church, and the holy Scriptures are read. Then this abridgment of faith is properly used, or when there is not time or opportunity to make any enlargement. But we are not to think it expressly contains in it all the necessary and weighty points, all the important doctrines of belief; it being only designed to be an abstract."

Here he commits himself, and Locke is not slow to take advantage of it. "Another indispensable requisite," says he, "in a *wise* reply, (the sneer at his wisdom had evidently galled him,) is, that it should be pertinent. Now what can there be more impertinent, than to confess the matter of fact upon which the objection is grounded; but, instead of destroying the inference drawn from that matter of fact, only amuse the reader with wrong reasons, why that matter of

fact was so? 'No, considerate man,' he says, 'doth wonder' that the articles and doctrines he mentioned are omitted in the Apostles' Creed: because that creed is a form of outward profession.—A profession! of what, I beseech you? Is it a form to be used for form's sake? I thought it had been a profession of something—even of the Christian faith: and if it be so, any considerate man *may* wonder necessary articles of the Christian faith should be left out of it. For, how it can be an outward profession of the Christian faith, without containing the Christian faith, I do not see; unless a man can outwardly profess the Christian faith in words that do not contain or express it; that is, profess the Christian faith when he does not profess it. But he says, 'tis a profession chiefly to be made use of in assemblies.' Do those solemn assemblies privilege it from containing the necessary articles of the Christian religion? This proves not that it does not, or was not, designed to contain all articles necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian; unless the unmasker can prove that a form of outward profession of the Christian faith, that contains all such necessary articles, cannot be made use of in public assemblies."

When Mr. Edwards wrote his opinion of the Apostles' Creed, he probably did not sufficiently consider either his own words, or the logical acuteness, and patient diligence of Locke; did not foresee that he was not to be silenced by railing, or satisfied with explanations so loose and imperfect. "In the public assemblies," says he, "when prayers are put up by the church, and the holy Scriptures are read, then this abridgement of faith is properly used; or when there is not generally time or opportunity to make an enlargement."

Upon this his adversary remarks :—"But that which contains not what is absolutely necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, can nowhere be properly used as 'a form of outward profession' of the Christian faith, and least of all in the solemn public assemblies. All the sense I can make of this is, that this abridgment of the Christian faith; that is, imperfect collection, as the Unmasker will have it, of some of the fundamental articles of Christianity, in the Apostles' Creed, which omits the greatest part of them, is made use of as a form of outward profession of but a part of the Christian faith, in the public assemblies; when, by reason of reading the Scriptures and prayers, there is not time or opportunity for a full and perfect profession of it.

"'Tis strange the Christian church," he continues, "should not find time or opportunity, in sixteen hundred years, to make, in any of her public assemblies, a profession of so much of her faith as is necessary to make a man a Christian. But, pray tell me, has the church any such full and complete form of faith, that hath in it all those propositions you have given us for necessary articles, not to say any thing of those which you have reserved to yourself in your own breast, and will not communicate—of which the Apostles' Creed is only a scanty form, a brief imperfect abstract; used only to save time in the crowd of other pressing occasions, that are always in haste to be despatched? If she has, the Unmasker will do well to produce it. If the church has no such complete form, besides the Apostles' Creed, anywhere, of fundamental articles, he will do well to leave talking idly of this 'abstract,' as he goes on to do in the following words :—'But we are not to think that it expressly contains in it all the necessary and weighty points, all the important doc-

trines of our belief; it being only designed to be an abstract.' Of what, I beseech you, is it an abstract? For here the Unmasker stops short; and as one that knows not well what to say, speaks not out what it is an abstract of; but provides himself a subterfuge in the generality of the preceding terms, of 'necessary and weighty points,' and 'important doctrines,' jumbled together; which can be there of no other use but to cover his ignorance or sophistry. But the question being only about necessary points, to what purpose are 'weighty and important doctrines' joined to them; unless he will say, that there is no difference between 'necessary' and 'weighty points,' fundamental and 'important doctrines?' And if so, then the distinction of points into necessary and not necessary will be foolish and impertinent; and all the doctrines contained in the Bible will be absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed by every man to make him a Christian. But taking it for granted, that the distinction of truths contained in the Gospel into points absolutely necessary, and not absolutely necessary to be believed to make a man a Chistian, is good; I desire the Unmasker to tell us, what the Apostles' Creed is an abstract of. He will, perhaps, answer, that he has told us already, in this very page, where he says it is an 'abridgment of faith;' and he has said true in words, but saying those words by rote after others, without understanding them, he has said so in a sense that is not true. For he supposes it an 'abridgment of faith' by containing only a few of the necessary articles of faith, and leaving out the far greater part of them; and so takes a part of a thing for an abridgment of it; whereas an abridgment or abstract of any thing is the whole in little: and if it be of a science or doctrine, the abridgment consists in the essential or necessary parts

of it, contracted into a narrower compass than where it lies diffused in the ordinary way of delivery, amongst a great number of transitions, explanations, illustrations, proofs, reasonings, corollaries, &c. All which, though they make a part of the discourse wherein that doctrine is delivered, are left out in the abridgment of it, wherein all the necessary parts of it are drawn together into less room. But though an abridgment need to contain none but the essential and necessary parts, yet all those it ought to contain; or else it will not be an abridgment or abstract of that thing, but an abridgment only of a part of it."[1]

But, as he proceeds, Mr. Edwards discovers that the Apostles' Creed is not really an abridgment of the

[1] Knot, the Jesuit, in his controversy with Chillingworth, had made much the same observation on the Apostles' Creed, to which that great logician thus replies:—"You trifle affectedly, confounding the apostles' belief of the whole religion of Christ, as it comprehends both what we are to do, and what we are to believe, with that part of it which contains not duties of obedience, but only the necessary articles of simple faith. Now, though the apostles' belief be, in the former sense, a larger thing than that which we call the Apostles' Creed; yet in the latter sense of the word, the Creed (I say) is a full comprehension of their belief, which you yourself have formerly confessed, though somewhat fearfully and inconstantly. And here, again, unwillingness to speak the truth, makes you speak that which is hardly sense, and call it an 'Abridgment of some articles of faith.' For I demand those some articles which you speak of—which are they? Those that are out of the creed, or those that are in it? Those that are in it, it comprehends at large; and therefore it is not an abridgment of them. Those that are out of it, it comprehends not at all; and therefore it is not an abridgment of them. If you would call it now an abridgement of faith, this would be sense; and signify thus much, that all the necessary articles of the Christian faith are comprised in it. For this is the proper duty of abridgments, to leave out nothing necessary."

Christian faith; for "if a man believe no more," says he, "than is in express terms in the Apostles' Creed, his faith will not be the faith of a Christian." Locke, as was to be expected, rejoices at the declaration made in this passage, "wherein he does great honour," says he, "to the primitive church, and particularly to the Church of England. The primitive church admitted converted heathens to baptism, upon the faith contained in the Apostles' Creed: a bare profession of that faith, and no more, was required of them to be received into the Church, and made members of Christ's body. How little different the faith of the ancient church was from the faith I have mentioned, may be seen in these words of Tertullian:— 'Regula fidei nostri una omnino est, sola, immobilis, irreformabilis; credendi scilicet in unicum Deum omnipotentem mundi conditorem, et Filium ejus Jesum Christum, natum ex Virgine Maria, crucifixum sub Pontio Pilato, tertia die resuscitatum à mortuis, receptum in cœlis, sedentem nunc ad dextram Patris, venturum judicare vivos et mortuos, per carnis etiam resurrectionem. Hâc lege fidei manente, cætera jam disciplinæ et conversationis admittunt novitatem correctionis.'

"This was the faith that, in Tertullian's time, sufficed to make a Christian. And the Church of England, as I have remarked already, only proposes the articles of the Apostles' Creed to the convert to be baptized; and upon his professing a belief of them, asks whether he will be baptized in this faith, which, if we will believe the Unmasker, is not the faith of a Christian. However, the church, without any more ado, upon the profession of this faith, and no other, baptizes him into it. So that the ancient church, if the Unmasker may be believed, baptized converts

into that faith which is not the faith of a Christian; and the Church of England, when she baptizes any one, makes him not a Christian."

Jeremy Taylor, in his "Liberty of Prophesying," takes precisely the same view of the question. He commences by giving an outline of the history of the creed, which is supposed to have been written by the apostles, or by holy men their contemporaries, and designed to be a rule of faith to all Christians, as appears from Irenæus, Tertullian, St. Cyprian, St. Austin, Rufinus, and, in short, all the orthodox fathers. "And, unless it had contained all the entire objects of faith, and the foundation of religion, it cannot be imagined (says he) to what purpose it should serve: and that it was so esteemed by the whole church of God in all ages, appears in this, that since faith is a necessary predisposition to baptism, in all persons capable of the use of reason, all catechumens in the Latin church, coming to baptism, were interrogated concerning their faith, and gave satisfaction in the recitation of this creed." A little further on, as if anticipating the objections of Mr. Edwards, he observes:— "Since it is necessary to rest somewhere, lest we should run to an infinity, it is best to rest there where the apostles and the churches apostolical rested; when not only they who are able to judge, but others who are not, are equally ascertained of the certainty and of the sufficiency of that explication. This, I say, not that I believe it unlawful or unsafe for the church, or any of the ecclesiastical rulers, or any wise man to extend his own creed to any thing which may certainly follow from any one of the articles; but I say that no such deduction is fit to be pressed on others as an article of faith; and that every deduction which is so made, unless it is such a thing as is at first evi-

dent to all, is but sufficient to make a human faith, nor can it amount to a divine, much less can be obligatory to bind a person of differing persuasion to subscribe, under pain of losing his faith, or being a heretic." [1]

Provided, therefore, Locke considered the Apostles' Creed to be the symbol of his faith, and subscribed to all the articles it contained, he was an orthodox Christian. But his antagonist, unwilling, on any condition, to receive a philosopher into brotherly fellowship, waving his objections against the sufficiency of the creed, asserted that he did not believe even so much. "I crave leave to tell him," says he, "that the Apostles' Creed hath more in it than he, or his brethren will subscribe to." Here, then, the question is brought to a point. Did Locke believe the creed or not? Mr. Edwards affirms the negative; and if Mr. Edwards is right, Locke was not a Christian. But let us hear the accused in his own defence:— "Were it not the undoubted privilege of the Unmasker to know me better than I do myself, for he is always telling me something of myself which I did not know, I would, in my turn, crave leave to tell him, that this is the faith I was baptized into, no one tittle whereof I have renounced, that I know; and that I heretofore thought, that gave me title to be a Christian." This is decisive: Locke was a believer, unless we can suppose him to have solemnly affirmed an untruth; a supposition which would do little credit to our Christian charity.

In the "Reasonableness of Christianity" Locke has chiefly supported his views with texts from those portions of the New Testament which record the discourses of our Saviour and his apostles; and for this

[1] Liberty of Prophesying, p. 11, 18.

proceeding his reason was, that the fundamental articles of our faith are in the epistles promiscuously, and without distinction, mixed with other truths. But Mr. Edwards's ingenuity immediately suggests another reason. Locke, he continually maintains, was desirous of reducing the number of necessary articles of faith, and therefore purposely omitted the epistolary writings of the apostles, because they are fraught with other fundamental doctrines besides the one he argues for. He then enumerates these fundamental articles, viz.: 1. The corruption and degeneracy of human nature, with the true origin of it—the defection of our first parents. 2. The propagation of sin and mortality. 3. Our restoration and reconciliation by Christ's blood. 4. The eminency and excellency of his priesthood. 5. The efficacy of his death. 6. The full satisfaction made thereby to divine justice. 7. His being an all-sufficient sacrifice for sin. 8. Christ's righteousness. 9. Our justification by it. 10. Election. 11. Adoption. 12. Sanctification. 13. Saving faith. 14. The nature of the gospel. 15. The new covenant. 16. The riches of God's mercy in the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. 17. The certainty of the resurrection of our bodies, and of the future glory.

In his "First Vindication" Locke replies seriously, and at length, to the accusation of his adversary; and inquires whether every one of these "fundamental doctrines" is required to be believed to make a man a Christian, and such as without the actual belief thereof, he cannot be saved. If so, small indeed would be the number of the elect; no ignorant man could possibly be saved; for none but learned theologians could even comprehend the terms of the several propositions; and no man, perhaps, could form, on all

these points, an opinion that should be perfectly free from error. But let him explain his own views:—"If they are not necessary, every one of them, you may call them fundamental doctrines as much as you please, they are not of those doctrines of faith I was speaking of, which are only such as are required to be actually believed to make a man a Christian. If you say, some of them are such necessary points of faith, and others not, you, by this specious list of well sounding, but unexplained terms, arbitrarily collected, only make good what I have said; viz., that the necessary articles of faith are in the epistles promiscuously delivered with other truths, and therefore they cannot be distinguished but by some other mark than being barely found in the epistles. If you say that they are all of them necessary articles of faith, I shall then desire you to reduce them to so many plain doctrines, and then prove them required to be believed by every Christian man to make him a member of the Christian church."

In the "Second Vindication" he thus pursues the same argument:—"Can there be any thing more absurd than to say there are several fundamental articles, each of which every man must explicitly believe, upon pain of damnation, and yet not be able to say which they be? The Unmasker has set down no small number; but yet dares not say, 'These are all.' On the contrary, he has plainly confessed there are more; but will not, that is, cannot, tell what they are that remain behind; nay, has given a general description of his fundamental articles, by which it is not evident but there may be ten times as many as those he had named; and amongst them, if he durst or could name them, probably several, that many a good Christian, who died in the faith, and is now in

heaven, never once thought of; and others, which many, of as good authority as he, would, from their different systems, certainly deny and contradict."

We shall conclude our account of this part of the controversy with the following passage, from the "First Vindication." "The list of materials for his creed—for the articles are not yet formed—Mr. Edwards closes with these words:—'These are the matters of faith contained in the epistles, and they are essential and integral parts of the gospel itself.' What, just these? Neither more nor less? If you are sure of it, pray let us have them speedily, for the reconciling of differences in the Christian church, which has been so cruelly torn about the articles of the Christian faith, to the great reproach of Christian charity, and scandal of our true religion."

At length Mr. Edwards, setting aside all minor considerations, comes at once to the doctrine of the Trinity, and affirms that, because this doctrine is discoverable in them, they were passed over with contempt by Locke. His words are:—"He doth this,—that is, pass by the epistles with contempt—because he knew that there are so many and frequent, and those so illustrious and eminent attestations to the doctrine of the ever-to-be-adored Trinity, in these epistles." He adds, that Locke expounds John, xiv. 9., &c., after the antitrinitarian mode; and makes Christ and Adam to be sons of God in the same sense, and by their birth. Stillingfleet, who also urged this point of the Trinity, in his controversy with our philosopher, received no answer; but, in a letter to his relation, afterwards Lord Chancellor King, he says:—"If those gentlemen think that the bishop hath the advantage by not making good one of those many propositions in debate between us, but by asking a question, a personal ques-

tion, nothing to the purpose, I shall not envy him such a victory. In the meantime, if this be all they have to say, the world, that sees not with their eyes, will see what disputants for truth those are, who make to themselves occasions of calumny, and think that a triumph. The Bishop is to prove, that my book has something in it that is inconsistent with the doctrine of the Trinity; and all that upon examination he does, is to ask me whether I believe the doctrine of the Trinity as it has been received in the Christian church? A worthy proof!"

This is all we have observed in his works bearing directly upon this point. With respect to the sense in which he supposes the phrase, "Son of God," to be employed in the Scriptures, he is sufficiently explicit. In his "First Vindication," he says:—"If the sense wherein I understand those texts (John xiv. 9, &c.) be a mistake, I shall be beholden to you if you will set me right. But they are not popular authorities, or frightful names, whereby I judge of truth or falsehood. You will now, no doubt, applaud your conjectures: the point is gained, and I am openly a Socinian, since I will not disown that I think the 'Son of God' was a phrase that among the Jews in our Saviour's time was used for the 'Messiah,' though the Socinians understand it in the same sense; and therefore I must certainly be of their persuasion in every thing else. I admire the acuteness, force, and fairness of your reasoning, and so I leave you to triumph in your conjectures. Only I must desire you to take notice, that that ornament of our church, and every way eminent prelate, the late Archbishop of Canterbury, understood that phrase in the same sense that I do, without being a Socinian. You may read what he says concerning Nathaniel, in his first sermon,

'Of Sincerity,' published this year. His words are these:—'And being satisfied that he—our Saviour—was the Messiah, he presently owned him for such, calling him the Son of God, and the King of Israel.'"

Locke afterwards found in Patrick, Bishop of Ely's "Witnesses to Christianity," several passages in support of his interpretation of the phrase, "Son of God." If, therefore, Mr. Edwards persisted in calling him a Socinian, to be consistent, he must bestow the same epithet on Bishop Patrick, who says, "To be the Son of God, and to be Christ, being but different expressions of the same thing;" and, "It is the very same thing to believe that Jesus is the Christ, and to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, express it how you please. This alone is the faith which can regenerate a man, and put a divine spirit into him; that is, make him a conqueror over the world, as Jesus was."[1]

This leads us to the principal subject of the controversy. Locke having laid down, as the great basis of Christianity, the belief that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, to prove which is the object of his whole treatise on the Christian religion, Mr. Edwards accuses him of reducing Christianity to one article, in order to bring it the nearer to none. This might, at the first blush, have caused it to appear that Locke desired to exclude the belief in the existence of a God, which was manifestly untrue. To excuse himself, therefore, for dwelling so jocularly on the "one article," the Unmasker says:—"When I told him of this one article, he knew well enough that I did not exclude the article of the Deity, for that is a principle of natural religion." To this the philoso-

[1] Witnesses to Christianity, p. 10. 14.

pher answers:—"How should I know it? He never told me so, either in his book or otherwise. This I know, that he said I contended for 'one article, with the exclusion of all the rest.' If then the belief of the Deity be an article of faith, and be not the article of Jesus being the Messiah, it is one 'of the rest;' and if all the rest were excluded, certainly that being one of all the rest, must be excluded. How then he could say, I knew that he excluded it not,—that is, meant not that I excluded it,—when he positively says I did exclude it, I cannot tell, unless he thought that I knew him so well, that when he said one thing, I knew that he meant another, and that the quite contrary."

Having given a list, which has already been cited, of fundamental truths, Mr. Edwards observes: "From what I have said, it is evident, that the Vindicator is grossly mistaken, when he saith, 'Whatever doctrine the apostles required to be believed to make a man a Christian,' are to be found in those places of Scripture which he has quoted in his book. I think I have sufficiently proved that there are other doctrines besides that, which are required to be believed to make a man a Christian."

In answer to this Locke insists that all his adversary might advance would signify nothing, unless he could prove "that what our Saviour and his apostles preached, and admitted men into the church for believing, is not all that is absolutely required to make a man a Christian; or, that the believing him to be the Messiah was not the only article they insisted on, to those who acknowledged one God; and upon the belief whereof they admitted converts into the church, in any one of those many places quoted by me out of the history of the New Testament." He then pro-

ceeds to show that if those admitted into the church by our Saviour and his apostles, were admitted without having any other article explicitly laid before them, the belief of no other article is necessary. "Unless," says he, "you will say that our Saviour and his apostles admitted men into the church that were not qualified with such a faith as was absolutely necessary to make a man a Christian; which is as much as to say, that they allowed and pronounced men to be Christians, who were not Christians. For he that wants what is necessary to make a man a Christian, can no more be a Christian than he that wants what is necessary to make him a man can be a man."

In the "Reasonableness of Christianity" Locke is methodical, clear, concise. He encumbers not his argument with unnecessary illustrations, nor does he carry forward his analysis beyond the limits which a severe judgment may approve. In the "Second Vindication" the reverse of all this is true. He appears to have ill digested his plan; not to have considered where he should begin, or where end; he pauses, and exhausts his own ingenuity, and the reader's patience, in refuting some pitiful cavil, in repelling scorn with scorn; and loses himself in a maze of endless repetitions. It must, moreover, be acknowledged, that through many a dreary page we look in vain for any trace of that superior mind which gave birth to the "Essay on the Human Understanding," the "Letters on Toleration," and the "Treatise on Government;" and though some striking passages do occur, they are few, and hardly compensate for the drudgery which must lead to their discovery. The following outline, however, of the whole scheme of natural and revealed religion is worthy of being preserved.

"As men," he observes, "we have God for our

King, and are under the law of reason: as Christians, we have Jesus the Messiah for our King, and are under the law revealed by him in the gospel. And though every Christian, both as a Deist and a Christian, be obliged to study both the law of nature and the revealed law, that in them he may know the will of God, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; yet in neither of these laws is there to be found a select set of fundamentals, distinct from the rest, which are to make him a Deist or a Christian. But he that believes one eternal invisible God, his Lord and King, ceases thereby to be an Atheist; and he that believes Jesus to be the Messiah, his King, ordained by God, thereby becomes a Christian, is delivered from the power of darkness, and is translated into the kingdom of the Son of God, is actually within the covenant of grace, and has that faith which shall be imputed to him for righteousness; and, if he continue in his allegiance to this his king, shall receive the reward—eternal life."

He then deprecates the practice, too common among theologians, of erecting individual views of religion into systems, and endeavouring to force them upon mankind; nearly every proposition in the Scriptures, with every deduction that may be drawn from it, having been, by some one or another, advanced as a necessary article of faith. "'Tis no wonder, therefore," he observes, "there have been such fierce contests, and such cruel havoc made amongst Christians, about fundamentals; whilst every one would set up his system, upon pain of fire and faggot in this, and hell-fire in the other world: though at the same time, whilst he is exercising the utmost barbarities against others, to prove himself a true Christian, he professes himself so ignorant that he cannot tell, or so uncha-

ritable that he will not tell, what articles are absolutely necessary and sufficient to make a man a Christian. If there be any such fundamentals, as it is certain there are, it is as certain they must be very plain."

Against the idea of Christianity's being plain, and reasonable, and intelligible, Mr. Edwards takes violent exception. He thinks it absurd that the vulgar should be supposed capable of comprehending all the truths of their religion; though, at the same time, he insists there is nothing in the Scriptures not necessary to be believed; and, as it seems somewhat harsh to require a man to believe that of which he can form no idea, he, upon second thoughts, but without perceiving he is conceding a point to Locke, admits that the truths of the gospel are as clear as clearness can make them.

Let us put all these propositions together in Mr. Edwards's own words, to show upon what a logical system he reasons. "Christianity is called a mystery. . . . All things in Christianity are not plain, and exactly level to every common apprehension. . . . . Every thing in Christianity is not clear, and intelligible, and comprehensible by the *weakest noddle*." Anon, taking another view of the matter, he says:— "Why did the apostles write these? was it not that those they wrote to, might give their assent to them? Why should not *every one of these evangelical truths* be believed and embraced? They are in our Bibles for that very purpose." And, as a reason why they should be believed, he says they are "intelligible and plain;" that there is no "ambiguity and doubtfulness in them; they shine with their own light, and to an unprejudiced eye, are plain, evident, and illustrious."

Upon this Locke remarks:—"To draw the Unmasker out of the clouds, and prevent his hiding himself in the doubtfulness of his expressions, I shall desire him to say directly whether the articles which are necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, and particularly those he has set down for such, are all plain and intelligible, and such as may be understood and comprehended (I will not say in the Unmasker's ridiculous way, 'by the weakest noddles,' but) by every illiterate countryman and woman capable of church communion? If he says yes, then all mysteries are excluded out of his articles necessary to be believed, to make a man a Christian. For that which can be comprehended by every day-labourer, every poor spinster, that is a member of the church, cannot be a mystery. And if what such illiterate people cannot understand, be required to be believed to make them Christians, the greatest part of mankind are shut out from being Christians."

To this, by anticipation, Mr. Edwards answers:—"There is a difficulty in the doctrine of the Trinity, and several truths of the gospel, as to the exact manner of the things themselves, which we shall never be able to comprehend, at least on this side heaven: but there is no difficulty as to the reality and certainty of them, because we know they are revealed to us by God in the Holy Scriptures." "Which answer," says Locke, "of difficulty in the manner, and no difficulty in the reality, having the appearance of a distinction, looks like learning; but when it comes to be applied to the case in hand, will scarce afford us sense. The question is about a proposition to be believed, which must first necessarily be understood. For a man cannot possibly give his assent to any affirmation or negation, unless he understand the terms as they

are joined in that proposition, and has a conception of the thing affirmed or denied; and also a conception of the thing concerning which it is affirmed or denied, as they are there put together. But let the proposition be what it will, there is no more to be understood than is expressed in the terms of that proposition. If it be a proposition concerning a matter of fact, it is enough to conceive, and believe the matter of fact. If it be a proposition concerning the manner of the fact, the manner of the fact must also be believed, as it is intelligibly expressed in that proposition: v. g. should this proposition, *νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται*, be offered as an article of faith to an illiterate countryman of England, he could not believe it; because, though a true proposition, yet it being proposed, in words whose meaning he understood not, he could not give any assent to it. Put it in English, he understands what is meant by 'the dead shall rise.' For he can conceive, that the same man who was dead and senseless, should be alive again; as well as he can that the same man who is now in a lethargy, should awake again; or the same man that is now out of his sight, and he knows not whether he be alive or dead, should return and be with him again; and so he is capable of believing it, though he conceives nothing of the manner how a man revives, wakes, or moves. But none of these manners of those actions being included in those propositions, the proposition concerning the matter of fact—if it imply no contradiction in it—may be believed; and so all that is required may be done, whatever difficulty may be as to the exact manner how it is brought about.

"But where the proposition is about the manner, the belief too must be of the manner; v. g. the article is, 'the dead shall be raised with spiritual bodies:'

and then the belief must be as well of this manner of the fact as of the fact itself. So that what is said here by the Unmasker about the manner, signifies nothing at all in the case. What is understood to be expressed in each proposition, whether it be of the manner, or not of the manner, is—by its being a revelation from God—to be believed, as far as it is understood: but no more is required to be believed, concerning any article, than is contained in that article.

"What the Unmasker, for the removing of difficulties, adds further, in these words:—'But there is no difficulty as to the reality and certainty of the truths of the gospel, because we know they are revealed to us by God in the Holy Scriptures,' is yet further from signifying any thing to the purpose, than the former. The question is about understanding, and, in what sense they are understood, believing several propositions, or articles of faith, which are to be found in the Scripture. To this the Unmasker says, there can be 'no difficulty at all as to their reality and certainty, because they are revealed by God.' Which amounts to no more than this: that there is no difficulty in the understanding and believing this proposition—that whatever is revealed by God is really and certainly true. But is the understanding and believing this single proposition, the understanding and believing all the articles of faith necessary to be believed? Is this all the explicit faith a Christian need have? If so, then a Christian need explicitly believe no more but this one proposition, viz. that all the propositions between the two covers of his Bible, are certainly true. But I imagine the Unmasker will not think the believing this one proposition is a sufficient belief of all those fundamental articles, which he has given us as

necessary to be believed, to make a man a Christian. For, if that will serve the turn. I conclude he may make his set of fundamentals as large and express to his system as he pleases: Calvinists, Arminians, Anabaptists, Socinians, will all thus own the belief of them; viz. that all that God has revealed in the Scriptures is really and certainly true."

Between the publication of the several editions of the "Essay on the Human Understanding," which appeared during his lifetime, Locke changed his opinion on more than one point; and, like an honest and independent thinker, he was always careful to acknowledge this change. This, among other things, was the case with the use of syllogisms. For in book iv. ch. 17, "I grant," says he, "that mood and figure is commonly made use of in such cases, (in the discovery of fallacies,) as if the detection of the incoherence of such loose discourses were wholly owing to the syllogistical form; and so I myself formerly thought, till upon a stricter examination I now find, that laying the intermediate ideas naked, in their due order, shows the incoherence of the argumentation better than syllogism." His opinions, however, on this point, were fluctuating; for in his "Second Vindication," speaking of the fallacies and incoherences of his antagonist, he has these words:—"Nay, if he, or anybody, in the 112 pages of his 'Socinianism Unmasked,' can find but ten arguments that will bear *the test of syllogism*, *the true touchstone of right arguing*, I will grant that that treatise deserves all those commendations he has bestowed upon it; though it be made up more of his own panegyric than a confutation of me."

We have here given a concise view of the controversy, everywhere employing, as far as possible, the words of the writers themselves; but, it must be con-

fessed, our outline is far from being complete; it being impossible, perhaps, to condense into so small a space, the matter of so many bulky volumes. If the reader is desirous of examining the subject at greater length, we must, therefore, refer him to the original works, where he will find more than enough to satisfy his curiosity.

AN ESSAY

FOR THE

UNDERSTANDING OF ST. PAUL'S EPISTLES,

BY CONSULTING

ST. PAUL HIMSELF.

Locke having, in his controversy with Mr. Edwards, had his attention frequently and forcibly directed to the Epistles of St. Paul, which, in his work on Christianity, he was accused of keeping purposely out of sight, betook himself, with renewed diligence, to the study of those parts of Scripture. The result of these studies, undertaken in a mature age, and furthered by every help that learning or philosophy could furnish, was "A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Galatians, Corinthians, Romans, and Ephesians." To this work, not published until after the philosopher's death, was prefixed, "An Essay for the Understanding of St. Paul's Epistles, by consulting St. Paul himself," written in the best manner of its distinguished author. But, notwithstanding its singular excellences, it appears to have hitherto attracted comparatively little notice. No collection of religious works, so far as I know, contains it; nor has it ever, I believe, been detached from the Paraphrase and Notes, and published in a separate form. I trust, however, the reader will quickly perceive its great value, not merely as a literary composition, though in that respect also it be a remarkable work; but as showing how earnestly and incessantly the noblest minds have laboured to master the sense of the Apostle to the Gentiles; thus, by their example, encouraging others to the undertaking, which he who properly enters on will consider no task.—Ed.

AN ESSAY, &c.

To go about to explain any of St. Paul's Epistles, after so great a train of expositors and commentators, might seem an attempt of vanity, censurable for its needlessness, did not the daily and approved examples of pious and learned men justify it. This may be some excuse for me to the public, if ever these following papers should chance to come abroad: but to myself, for whose use this work was undertaken, I need make no apology. Though I had been conversant in these epistles, as well as in other parts of sacred Scripture, yet I found that I understood them not—I mean the doctrinal and discursive parts of them: though the practical directions, which are usually dropped in the latter part of each epistle, appeared to me very plain, intelligible, and instructive.

I did not, when I reflected on it, very much wonder that this part of sacred Scripture had difficulties in it: many causes of obscurity did readily occur to me. The nature of epistolary writings in general, disposes the writer to pass by the men-

tioning of many things, as well known to him to whom his letter is addressed, which are necessary to be laid open to a stranger, to make him comprehend what is said: and it not seldom falls out, that a well-penned letter, which is very easy and intelligible to the receiver, is very obscure to a stranger, who hardly knows what to make of it. The matters that St. Paul wrote about, were certainly things well known to those he wrote to, and which they had some peculiar concern in, which made them easily apprehend his meaning, and see the tendency and force of his discourse. But we having now, at this distance, no information of the occasion of his writing, little or no knowledge of the temper and circumstances those he wrote to were in, but what is to be gathered out of the epistles themselves, it is not strange that many things in them lie concealed to us, which no doubt they who were concerned in the letter understood at first sight. Add to this, that in many places it is manifest he answers letters sent, and questions proposed to him, which if we had, would much better clear those passages that relate to them, than all the learned notes of critics and commentators, who in after-times fill us with their conjectures; for very often, as to the matter in hand, they are nothing else.

The language wherein these epistles are written are another, and that no small occasion of their obscurity to us now: the words are Greek, a language dead many ages since: a language of a very witty volatile people, seekers after novelty, and abounding with a variety of notions and sects, to which they applied the terms of their common tongue with great liberty and variety: and yet this makes but one small part of the difficulty in the

language of these epistles; there is a peculiarity in it, that much more obscures and perplexes the meaning of these writings, than what can be occasioned by the looseness and variety of the Greek tongue. The terms are Greek, but the idiom or turn of the phrases may be truly said to be Hebrew or Syriac. The custom and familiarity of which tongues, do sometimes so far influence the expressions in these epistles, that one may observe the force of the Hebrew conjugations, particularly that of Hiphil, given to Greek verbs, in a way unknown to the Grecians themselves. Nor is this all: the subject treated of in these epistles is so wholly new, and the doctrines contained in them so perfectly remote from the notions that mankind were acquainted with, that most of the important terms in it have quite another signification from what they have in other discourses: so that putting all together, we may truly say, that the New Testament is a book written in a language peculiar to itself.

To these causes of obscurity, common to St. Paul with most of the other penmen of the several books of the New Testament, we may add those that are peculiarly his, and owing to his style and temper. He was, as it is visible, a man of quick thought and warm temper, mighty well versed in the writings of the Old Testament, and full of the doctrine of the New. All this put together, suggested matter to him in abundance on those subjects which came in his way; so that one may consider him, when he was writing, as beset with a crowd of thoughts, all striving for utterance. In this posture of mind it was almost impossible for him to keep that slow pace, and observe minutely that

order and method of ranging all he said, from which results an easy and obvious perspicuity. To this plenty and vehemence of his, may be imputed those many large parentheses, which a careful reader may observe in his epistles. Upon this account also it is, that he often breaks off in the middle of an argument, to let in some new thought suggested by his own words; which having pursued and explained, as far as conduced to his present purpose, he reassumes again the thread of his discourse, and goes on with it, without taking any notice that he returns again to what he had been before saying, though sometimes it be so far off, that it may well have slipt out of his mind, and requires a very attentive reader to observe, and so bring the disjointed members together, as to make up the connexion, and see how the scattered parts of the discourse hang together in a coherent, well-agreeing sense, that makes it all of a piece.

Besides the disturbance in perusing St. Paul's epistles, from the plenty and vivacity of his thoughts, which may obscure his method, and often hide his sense from an unwary, or over-hasty reader; the frequent changing of the personage he speaks in, renders the sense very uncertain, and is apt to mislead one that has not some clue to guide him:—sometimes by the pronoun I, he means himself, sometimes any Christian; sometimes a Jew, and sometimes any man, &c. If speaking of himself in the first person singular has so various meanings, his use of the first person plural is with a far greater latitude; sometimes designing himself alone, sometimes those with himself, whom he makes partners to the epistle; sometimes with himself comprehending the other apostles, or

preachers of the gospel, or Christians: nay, sometimes he in that way speaks of the converted Jews, other times of the converted Gentiles, and sometimes of others, in a more or less extended sense, every one of which varies the meaning of the place, and makes it to be differently understood. I have forborne to trouble the reader with examples of them here. If his own observation hath not already furnished him with them, a little attention will satisfy him in the point.

In the current also of his discourse, he sometimes drops in the objections of others and his answers to them, without any change in the scheme of his language, that might give notice of any other speaking besides himself. This requires great attention to observe; and yet if it be neglected or overlooked, will make the reader very much mistake, and misunderstand his meaning, and render the sense very perplexed.

These are intrinsic difficulties arising from the text itself, whereof there might be a great many other named, as the uncertainty, sometimes, who are the persons he speaks to, or the opinions or practices which he has in his eye; sometimes in alluding to them, sometimes in his exhortations and reproofs. But those above mentioned being the chief, it may suffice to have opened our eyes a little upon them, which, well examined, may contribute towards our discovery of the rest.

To these we may subjoin two external causes that have made no small increase of the native and original difficulties that keep us from an easy and assured discovery of St. Paul's sense, in many parts of his epistles; and those are,

First, The dividing of them into chapters and verses, as we have done, whereby they are so chopped and minced, and as they are now printed, stand so broken and divided, that not only the common people take the verses usually for distinct aphorisms, but even men of more advanced knowledge, in reading them, lose very much of the strength and force of the coherence, and the light that depends on it. Our minds are so weak and narrow, that they have need of all the helps and assistances that can be procured, to lay before them undisturbedly, the thread and coherence of any discourse; by which alone they are truly improved and lead into the genuine sense of the author. When the eye is constantly disturbed with loose sentences, that by their standing and separation appear as so many distinct fragments, the mind will have much ado to take in, and carry on in its memory an uniform discourse of dependent reasonings; especially having from the cradle been used to wrong impressions concerning them, and constantly accustomed to hear them quoted as distinct sentences, without any limitation or explication of their precise meaning from the place they stand in, and the relation they bear to what goes before, or follows. These divisions, also, have given occasion to the reading these epistles by parcels and in scraps, which has further confirmed the evil arising from such partitions. And I doubt not but every one will confess it to be a very unlikely way to come to the understanding of any other letters, to read them piecemeal, a bit to-day and another scrap to-morrow, and so on, by broken intervals; especially if the pause and cessation should be made as the

chapters the apostle's epistles are divided into, ending sometimes in the middle of a discourse, and sometimes in the middle of a sentence. It cannot therefore but be wondered, that that should be permitted to be done to Holy Writ, which would visibly disturb the sense, and hinder the understanding of any other book whatsoever. If Tully's epistles were so printed, and so used, I ask whether they would not be much harder to be understood, less easy and less pleasant to be read by much, than now they are?

How plain soever this abuse is, and what prejudice soever it does to the understanding of the sacred Scripture, yet if a Bible was printed as it should be, and as the several parts of it were written, in continued discourses where the argument is continued, I doubt not but the several parties would complain of it as an innovation, and a dangerous change in the publishing those holy books. And indeed those who are for maintaining their opinions and the systems of parties by sound of words, with a neglect of the true sense of Scripture, would have reason to make and foment the outcry. They would most of them be immediately disarmed of their great magazine of artillery wherewith they defend themselves, and fall upon others, if the holy Scriptures were but laid before the eyes of Christians in its due connexion and consistency: it would not then be so easy to snatch out a few words, as if they were separate from the rest, to serve a purpose, to which they do not at all belong, and with which they have nothing to do. But as the matter now stands, he that has a mind to it may, at a cheap rate, be a notable champion for the truth; that is, for the doctrines of the sect that chance or

interest has cast him into. He need but be furnished with verses of sacred Scripture, containing words and expressions that are but flexible, (as all general, obscure, and doubtful ones are,) and his system, that has appropriated them to the orthodoxy of his church, makes them immediately strong and irrefragable arguments for his opinion. This is the benefit of loose sentences, and Scripture crumbled into verses, which quickly turn into independent aphorisms. But if the quotation in the verse produced were considered as a part of a continued coherent discourse, and so its sense were limited by the tenor of the context, most of these forward and warm disputants would be quite stripped of those, which they doubt not now to call spiritual weapons; and they would have often nothing to say that would not show their weakness, and manifestly fly in their faces. I crave leave to set down a saying of the learned and judicious Mr. Selden: "In interpreting the Scripture," says he, "many do as if a man should see one have ten pounds, which he reckoned by 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; meaning four was but four units, and five five units, &c.: and that he had in all but ten pounds. The other that sees him, takes not the figures together, as he doth, but picks here and there; and thereupon reports that he had five pounds in one bag, and six pounds in another bag, and nine pounds in another bag, &c., when, as in truth, he has but ten pounds in all. So we pick out a text here and there, to make it serve our turn; whereas if we take it altogether, and consider what went before, and what followed after, we should find it meant no such thing." I have heard sober Christians very much admire why ordinary illiterate

people, who were professors, that showed a concern for religion, seemed much more conversant in St. Paul's epistles, than in the plainer, and as it seemed to them, much more intelligible parts of the New Testament: they confessed, that though they read St. Paul's epistles with their best attention, yet they generally found them too hard to be mastered; and they laboured in vain so far to reach the apostle's meaning all along, in the train of what he said, as to read them with that satisfaction that arises from a feeling that we understand and fully comprehend the force and reasoning of an author; and therefore they could not imagine what those saw in them, whose eyes they thought not much better than their own. But the case was plain: these sober, inquisitive readers had a mind to see nothing in St. Paul's epistles but just what he meant: whereas those others of a quicker and gayer sight could see in them what they pleased. Nothing is more acceptable to fancy than pliant terms and expressions that are not obstinate; in such it can find its account with delight, and with them be illuminated, orthodox, infallible at pleasure, and in its own way. But where the sense of the author goes visibly in its own train, and the words receiving a determined sense from their companions and adjacents, will not consent to give countenance and colour to what is agreed to be right, and must be supported at any rate, there men of established orthodoxy do not so well find their satisfaction. And, perhaps, if it were well examined, it would be no very extravagant paradox to say, that there are fewer that bring their opinions to the sacred Scripture, to be tried by that infallible rule, than bring the sacred Scripture to their opinions,

to bend it to them, to make it as they can a cover and guard of them. And to this purpose its being divided into verses, and brought as much as may be into loose and general aphorisms, makes it most useful and serviceable. And in this lies the other great cause of obscurity and perplexedness, which has been cast upon St. Paul's epistles from without.

St. Paul's epistles, as they stand translated in our English Bibles, are now, by long and constant use, become a part of the English language, and common phraseology, especially in matters of religion. This every one uses familiarly, and thinks he understands; but it must be observed, that if he has a distinct meaning when he uses those words and phrases, and knows himself what he intends by them, it is always according to the sense of his own system, and the articles or interpretations of the society he is engaged in. So that all this knowledge and understanding which he has in the use of these passages of sacred Scripture, reaches no further than this, that he knows (and that is very well) what he himself says, but thereby knows nothing at all what St. Paul said in them. The apostle wrote not by that man's system, and so his meaning cannot be known by it. This being the ordinary way of understanding the epistles, and every sect being perfectly orthodox in its own judgment, what a great and invincible darkness must this cast upon St. Paul's meaning to all those of that way, in all those places where his thoughts and sense run counter to what any party has espoused for orthodox; as it must unavoidably to all but one of the different systems, in all those passages that any way relate to the points in controversy between them?

This is a mischief which, however frequent and almost natural, reaches so far, that it would justly make all those who depend upon them, wholly diffident of commentators, and let them see how little help was to be expected from them, in relying on them for the true sense of the sacred Scripture, did they not take care to help to cozen themselves, by choosing to use and pin their faith on such expositors as explain the sacred Scripture in favour of those opinions that they beforehand have voted orthodox, and bring to the sacred Scripture, not for trial, but confirmation. Nobody can think that any text of St. Paul's epistles has two contrary meanings; and yet so it must have to two different men, who taking two commentators of different sects for their respective guides into the sense of any one of the epistles, shall build upon their respective expositions. We need go no further for a proof of it, than the notes of the two celebrated commentators on the New Testament, Dr. Hammond and Beza, both men of parts and learning, and both thought, by their followers, men mighty in the sacred Scriptures. So that here we see the hopes of great benefit and light from expositors and commentators is, in a great part, abated; and those who have most need of their help can receive but little from them, and can have very little assurance of reaching the apostle's sense by what they find in them, whilst matters remain in the same state they are in at present. For those who find they need help, and would borrow light from expositors, either consult only those who have the good luck to be thought sound and orthodox, avoiding those of different sentiments from themselves in the great and approved

points of their systems, as dangerous, and not fit to be meddled with; or else with indifferency look into the notes of all commentators promiscuously. The first of these take pains only to confirm themselves in the opinions and tenets they have already, which, whether it be the way to get the true meaning of what St. Paul delivered is easy to determine. The others, with much more fairness to themselves, though with reaping little more advantage, (unless they have something else to guide them into the apostle's meaning than the comments themselves,) seek help on all hands, and refuse not to be taught by any one, who offers to enlighten them in any of the dark passages. But here though they avoid the mischief which the others fall into, of being confined in their sense, and seeing nothing but that in St. Paul's writings, be it right or wrong, yet they run into as great on the other side, and instead of being confirmed in the meaning that they thought they saw in the text, are distracted with an hundred, suggested by those they advised with; and so, instead of that one sense of the Scripture, which they carried with them to their commentators, return from them with none at all.

This indeed seems to make the case desperate; for, if the comments and expositions of pious and learned men cannot be depended on, whither shal we go for help? To which I answer, I would not be mistaken, as if I thought the labours of the learned in this case wholly lost, and fruitless. There is great use and benefit to be made of them, when we have once got a rule to know which of their expositions, in the great variety there is of them, explains the words and phrases according to

the apostle's meaning. Till then it is evident, from what is above said, they serve for the most part to no other use, but either to make us find our own sense, and not his, in St. Paul's words, or else to find in them no settled sense at all.

Here it will be asked, how shall we come by this rule you mention? Where is that touchstone to be had, that will show us whether the meaning we ourselves put, or take as put by others upon St. Paul's words in his epistles, be truly his meaning or no? I will not say the way which I propose, and have in the following paraphrase followed, will make us infallible in our interpretations of the apostle's text; but this I will own, that till I took this way, St. Paul's epistles to me, in the ordinary way of reading and studying them, were very obscure parts of Scripture, that left me almost everywhere at a loss: and I was at a great uncertainty in which of the contrary senses, that were to be found in his commentators, he was to be taken. Whether what I have done has made it any clearer and more visible now, I must leave others to judge. This I beg leave to say for myself, that if some very sober judicious Christians, no strangers to the sacred Scriptures; nay, learned divines of the church of England, had not professed that by the perusal of these following papers they understood the epistles better much than they did before, and had not, with repeated instances, pressed me to publish them, I should not have consented they should have gone beyond my own private use, for which they were at first designed, and where they made me not repent my pains.

If any one be so far pleased with my endeavours, as to think it worth while to be informed

what was the clue I guided myself by through all the dark passages of these epistles, I shall minutely tell him the steps by which I was brought into this way, that he may judge whether I proceeded rationally, upon right grounds or no, if so be, anything in so mean an example as mine may be worth his notice.

After I had found, by long experience, that the reading of the text and comments in the ordinary way, proved not so successful as I wished to the end proposed, I began to suspect that in reading a chapter, as was usual, and thereupon sometimes consulting expositors upon some hard places of it, which at that time most affected me, as relating to points then under consideration in my own mind, or in debate amongst others, was not a right method to get into the true sense of these epistles. I saw plainly, after I began once to reflect on it, that if any one now should write me a letter, as long as St. Paul's to the Romans, concerning such a matter as that is, in a style as foreign, and expressions as dubious as his seem to be, if I should divide it into fifteen or sixteen chapters, and read of them one to-day, and another to-morrow, &c., it was ten to one I should never come to a full and clear comprehension of it. The way to understand the mind of him that wrote it, every one would agree, was to read the whole letter through, from one end to the other, all at once, to see what was the main subject and tendency of it: or if it had several views and purposes in it, not dependent one of another, nor in a subordination to one chief aim and end, to discover what those different matters were, and where the author concluded one and began another: and if there were any ne-

cessity of dividing the epistle into parts, to make the boundaries of them.

In prosecution of this thought, I concluded it necessary, for the understanding of any one of St. Paul's epistles, to read it all through at one sitting, and to observe, as well as I could, the drift and design of his writing it. If the first reading gave me some light, the second gave me more; and so I persisted on reading, constantly, the whole epistle over at once, till I came to have a good general view of the apostle's main purpose in writing the epistle, the chief branches of his discourse wherein he prosecuted it, the arguments he used, and the disposition of the whole.

This, I confess, is not to be obtained by one or two hasty readings; it must be repeated again and again, with a close attention to the tenor of the discourse, and a perfect neglect of the divisions into chapters and verses. On the contrary, the safest way is to suppose that the epistle has but one business, and one aim; till, by a frequent perusal of it, you are forced to see there are distinct independent matters in it, which will forwardly enough show themselves.

It requires so much more pains, judgment and application to find the coherence of obscure and abstruse writings, and makes them so much the more unfit to serve prejudice and pre-occupation when found, that it is not to be wondered that St. Paul's epistles have, with many, passed rather for disjointed, loose, pious discourses, full of warmth and zeal and overflows of light, rather than for calm strong, coherent reasonings, that carried a thread of argument and consistency all through them.

But this muttering of lazy or ill-disposed read-

ers, hindered me not from persisting in the course I had begun: I continued to read the same epistle over and over, and over again, till I came to discover, as appeared to me, what was the drift and aim of it; and by what steps and arguments St. Paul prosecuted his purpose. I remembered that St. Paul was miraculously called to the ministry of the gospel, and declared to be a chosen vessel; that he had the whole doctrine of the gospel from God by immediate revelation, and was appointed to be the apostle of the Gentiles, for the propagating of it in the heathen world. This was enough to persuade me that he was not a man of loose and shattered parts, incapable to argue, and unfit to convince those he had to deal with. God knows how to choose fit instruments for the business he employs them in. A large stock of Jewish learning he had taken in at the feet of Gamaliel; and for his information in Christian knowledge, and the mysteries and depths of the dispensation of grace by Jesus Christ, God himself had condescended to be his instructor and teacher. The light of the gospel he had received from the Fountain and Father of Light himself, who, I concluded, had not furnished him, in this extraordinary manner, if all this plentiful stock of learning and illumination had been in danger to have been lost, or proved useless, in a jumbled and confused head; nor have laid up such a store of admirable and useful knowledge in a man who, for want of method and order, clearness of conception, or pertinency in discourse, could not draw it out into use with the greatest advantages of force and coherence. That he knew how to prosecute his purpose with strength of argument and

close reasoning, without incoherent sallies, or the intermixing of things foreign to his business, was evident to me from several speeches of his recorded in the Acts: and it was hard to think that a man who could talk with so much consistency and clearness of conviction, should not be able to write without confusion, inextricable obscurity, and perpetual rambling. The force, order, and perspicuity of those discourses could not be denied to be very visible. How then came it that the like was thought much wanting in his epistles? and of this there appeared to me this plain reason: the particularities of the history in which these speeches are inserted, show St. Paul's end in speaking; which being seen, casts a light on the whole, and shows the pertinency of all that he says. But his epistles not being so circumstantiated, there being no concurring history that plainly declares the disposition St. Paul was in, what the actions, expectations, or demands of those to whom he wrote required him to speak to, we are nowhere told. All this, and a great deal more, necessary to guide us into the true meaning of the epistles, is to be had only from the epistles themselves, and to be gathered from thence with stubborn attention, and more than common application.

This being the only safe guide (under the Spirit of God, that dictated these sacred writings) that can be relied on, I hope I may be excused, if I venture to say, that the utmost ought to be done to observe and trace out St. Paul's reasonings; to follow the thread of his discourse in each of his epistles; to show how it goes on still directed with the same view, and pertinently drawing the several inci-

dents towards the same point. To understand him right, his inferences should be strictly observed, and it should be carefully examined from what they are drawn, and what they tend to. He is certainly a coherent, argumentative, pertinent writer; and care, I think, should be taken, in expounding of him, to show that he is so. But though I say he has weighty aims in his epistles, which he steadily keeps in his eye, and drives at it in all that he says; yet I do not say that he puts his discourses into an artificial method, or leads his reader into a distinction of his arguments, or gives them notice of new matter by rhetorical or studied transitions. He has no ornaments borrowed from the Greek eloquence; no notions of their philosophy mixed with his doctrine to set it off. 'The enticing words of man's wisdom,' whereby he means all the studied rules of the Grecian schools, which made them such masters in the art of speaking, he, as he says himself, 1 Cor. 2. iv., wholly neglected. The reason whereof he gives in the next verse, and in other places; but the politeness of language, delicacy of style, fineness of expression, laboured periods, artificial transitions, and a very methodical ranging of the parts with such other embellishments as make a discourse enter the mind smoothly, and strike the fancy at first hearing, have little or no place in his style; yet coherence of discourse, and a direct tendency of all the parts of it to the argument in hand, are most eminently to be found in him. This I take to be his character, and doubt not but he will be found to be so upon diligent examination. And in this, if it be so, we have a clue, if we will take the pains to find it, that will conduct us with surety

through those seemingly dark places and imagined intricacies, in which Christians have wandered so far one from another as to find quite contrary senses.

Whether a superficial reading, accompanied with the common opinion of his invincible obscurity, has kept off some from seeking in him the coherence of a discourse tending, with close, strong reasoning, to a point; or a seemingly more honourable opinion of one that had been rapt up into the third heaven, as if from a man so warmed and illuminated as he had been, nothing could be expected but flashes of light, and raptures of zeal, hindered others to look for a train of reasoning, proceeding on regular and cogent argumentation, from a man raised above the ordinary pitch of humanity to a higher and brighter way of illumination; or else whether others were loath to beat their heads about the tenor and coherence in St. Paul's discourses, which, if found out, possibly might set him at a manifest and irreconcilable difference with their systems; it is certain that whatever hath been the cause, this way of getting the true sense of St. Paul's epistles seems not to have been much made use of, or at least so thoroughly pursued as I am apt to think it deserves.

For, granting that he was full-stored with the knowledge of the things he treated of, for he had light from heaven, it was God himself furnished him, and he could not want: allowing also that he had ability to make use of the knowledge given him, for the end for which it was given him, viz. the information, conviction, and conversion of others; and accordingly that he knew how to direct his discourse to the point in hand, we cannot

widely mistake the parts of his discourse employed about it, when we have anywhere found out the point he drives at: wherever we have got a view of his design, and the aim he proposed to himself in writing, we may be sure that such or such an interpretation does not give us his genuine sense, it being nothing at all to his present purpose. Nay, among various meanings given a text, it fails not to direct us to the best, and very often to assure us of the true. For it is no presumption, when one sees a man arguing for this or that proposition, if he be a sober man, master of reason or common sense, and takes any care of what he says, to pronounce with confidence, in several cases, that he could not talk thus or thus.

I do not yet so magnify this method of studying St. Paul's epistles, as well as other parts of sacred Scripture, as to think it will perfectly clear every hard place, and leave no doubt unresolved. I know expressions now out of use, opinions of those times not heard of in our days, allusions to customs lost to us, and various circumstances and particularities of the parties, which we cannot come at, &c., must needs continue several passages in the dark, now to us at this distance, which shone with full light to those they were directed to. But for all that, the studying of St. Paul's epistles in the way I have proposed, will, I humbly conceive, carry us a great length in the right understanding of them, and make us rejoice in the light we receive from those most useful parts of divine revelation, by furnishing us with visible grounds that we are not mistaken, whilst the consistency of the discourse and the pertinency of it to the design he is upon, vouches it worthy of our great apostle. At least

I hope it may be my excuse for having endeavoured to make St. Paul an interpreter to me of his own epistles.

To this may be added another help, which St. Paul himself affords us, towards the attaining the true meaning contained in his epistles. He that reads him with the attention I propose, will easily observe, that as he was full of the doctrine of the gospel, so it lay all clear and in order open to his view. When he gave his thoughts utterance upon any point, the matter flowed like a torrent, but it is plain, it was a matter he was perfectly master of: he fully possessed the entire revelation he had received from God, had thoroughly digested it, all the parts were formed together in his mind into one well-contracted harmonious body: so that he was no way at an uncertainty, nor ever in the least at a loss concerning any branch of it. One may see his thoughts were all of a piece in all his epistles; his notions were at all times uniform, and constantly the same, though his expressions very various. In them he seems to take great liberty. This at least is certain, that no one seems less tied up to a form of words. If then, having by the method before proposed got into the sense of the several epistles, we will but compare what he says in the places where he treats of the same subject, we can hardly be mistaken in his sense, nor doubt what it was that he believed and taught concerning those points of the Christian religion. I know it is not unusual to find a multitude of texts heaped up for the maintaining of an espoused proposition, but in a sense often so remote from their true meaning, that one can hardly avoid thinking that those who so used them either sought not or va-

lued not the sense; and were satisfied with the sound, where they could but get that to favour them. But a verbal concordance leads not always to texts of the same meaning: trusting too much thereto, will furnish us but with slight proofs in many cases; and any one may observe how apt that is to jumble together passages of Scripture not relating to the same matter, and thereby to disturb and unsettle the true meaning of Holy Scripture. I have therefore said that we should compare together places of Scripture treating of the same point. Thus, indeed, one part of the sacred text could not fail to give light unto another. And since the providence of God hath so ordered it, that St. Paul has written a great number of epistles, which though upon different occasions, and to several purposes, yet are all confined within the business of his apostleship, and so contain nothing but points of Christian instruction, amongst which he seldom fails to drop in, and often to enlarge on the great and distinguishing doctrines of our holy religion; which, if quitting our own infallibility in that analogy of faith which we have made to ourselves, or have implicitly adopted from some other, we would carefully lay together, and diligently compare and study, I am apt to think would give us St. Paul's system in a clear and indisputable sense; which every one must acknowledge to be a better standard to interpret his meaning by, in any obscure and doubtful parts of his epistles, if any such should still remain, than the system, confession, or articles of any church or society of Christians yet known, which, however pretended to be founded on Scripture, are visibly the contrivances of men, (fallible

both in their opinions and interpretations,) and, as is visible in most of them, made with partial views, and adapted to what the occasions of that time, and the present circumstances they were then in, were thought to require, for the support or justification of themselves. Their philosophy also has its part in misleading men from the true sense of the sacred Scripture. He that shall attentively read the Christian writers after the ages of the apostles, will easily find how much the philosophy they were tinctured with influenced them in their understanding of the books of the Old and New Testament. In the ages wherein Platonism prevailed, the converts to Christianity of that school, on all occasions, interpreted Holy Writ according to the notions they had imbibed from that philosophy. Aristotle's doctrine had the same effect in its turn, and when it degenerated into the Peripateticism of the schools, that too brought its notions and distinctions into divinity, and affixed them to the terms of the sacred Scripture. And we may see still how at this day every one's philosophy regulates every one's interpretation of the word of God. Those who are possessed with the doctrine of aërial and aëtherial vehicles, have thence borrowed an interpretation of the four first verses of 2 Cor. v, without having any ground to think that St. Paul had the least notion of any such vehicles. It is plain that the teaching of men philosophy was no part of the design of divine revelation; but that the expressions of Scripture are commonly suited in those matters to the vulgar apprehensions and conceptions of the place and people where they were delivered. And as to the doctrine therein directly taught by the apostles, that tends wholly

to the setting up the kingdom of Jesus Christ in this world, and the salvation of men's souls; and in this it is plain their expressions were conformed to the ideas and notions which they had received from revelation, or were consequent from it. We shall therefore in vain go about to interpret their words by the notions of our philosophy, and the doctrines of men delivered in our schools. This is to explain the apostles' meaning by what they never thought of whilst they were writing; which is not the way to find their sense in what they delivered, but our own, and to take up from their writings not what they left there for us, but what we bring along with us in ourselves. He that would understand St. Paul right, must understand his terms in the sense he uses them, and not as they are appropriated by each man's particular philosophy, to conceptions that never entered the mind of the apostle. For example, he that shall bring the philosophy now taught and received to the explaining of spirit, soul, and body, mentioned 1 Thess. v. 23, will, I fear, hardly reach St. Paul's sense, or represent to himself the notions St. Paul then had in his mind. That is what we should aim at in reading him, or any other author; and until we from his words paint his very ideas and thoughts in our minds, we do not understand him.

In the divisons I have made, I have endeavoured the best I could to govern myself by the diversity of matter. But in a writer like St. Paul, it is not so easy always to find precisely where one subject ends and another begins. He is full of the matter, he treats and writes with warmth, which usually neglects method, and those partitions and pauses, which men educated in the schools of rheto-

ricians usually observe. Those arts of writing St. Paul, as well out of design as temper, wholly laid by: the subject he had in hand, and the grounds upon which it stood firm, and by which he enforced it, was what alone he minded; and without solemnly winding up one argument, and intimating any way that he began another, let his thoughts, which were fully possessed of the matter, run in one continued train, wherein the parts of his discourse were wove one into another. So that it is seldom that the scheme of his discourse makes any gap; and, therefore, without breaking in upon the connexion of his language, it is hardly possible to separate his discourse, and give a distinct view of his several arguments in distinct sections.

I am far from pretending infallibility in the sense I have anywhere given in my Paraphrase or Notes; that would be to erect myself into an apostle, a presumption of the highest nature in any one that cannot confirm what he says by miracles. I have, for my own information, sought the true meaning as far as my poor abilities would reach: and I have unbiassedly embraced what, upon a fair inquiry, appeared so to me. This I thought my duty and interest in a matter of so great concernment to me. If I must believe for myself, it is unavoidable that I must understand for myself. For if I blindly and with an implicit faith, take the pope's interpretation of the sacred Scripture, without examining whether it be Christ's meaning, it is the pope I believe in, and not in Christ; it is his authority I rest upon; it is what he says I embrace: for what it is Christ says I neither know nor concern myself. It is

the same thing when I set up any other man in Christ's place, and make him the authentic interpreter of sacred Scripture to myself. He may possibly understand the sacred Scripture as right as any man; but I shall do well to examine myself whether that which I do not know, nay (which in the way I take) I can never know, can justify me in making myself his disciple, instead of Jesus Christ's, who of right is alone and ought to be my only Lord and master, and it will be no less sacrilege in me to substitute to myself any other in his room, to be a prophet to me, than to be my king or priest.

The same reasons that put me upon doing what I have in these papers done, will exempt me from all suspicion of imposing my interpretation on others. The reasons that led me into the meaning which prevailed on my mind, are set down with it: as far as they carry light and conviction to any other man's understanding, so far I hope my labour may be of some use to him; beyond the evidence it carries with it, I advise him not to follow mine, nor any man's interpretation. We are all men, liable to errors, and infected with them; but have this sure way to preserve ourselves every one from danger by them, if, laying aside sloth, carelessness, prejudice, party, and a reverence of men, we betake ourselves in earnest to the study of the way to salvation, in those holy writings wherein God has revealed it from heaven, and proposed it to the world, seeking our religion where we are sure it is in truth to be found, comparing spiritual things with spiritual things.

A

DISCOURSE

ON

MIRACLES.

THIS tractate may properly be regarded as the development of the view taken of the subject of miracles, in the Essay on the Human Understanding. And though neither very elaborate nor extensive, it will always, for the religious inquirer, possess considerable interest; partly for its intrinsic merits, partly because it contains the ripest thoughts of one of the greatest lights in philosophy that the world has to boast of. The passage of the Essay in which he had already, in the earlier part of his life, glanced at the subject, is as follows:—"Though the common experience, and the ordinary course of things, have justly a mighty influence on the minds of men, to make them give or refuse credit to any thing proposed to their belief; yet there is one case, wherein the strangeness of the fact lessens not the assent to a fair testimony given of it. For where such supernatural events are suitable to ends aimed at by Him, who has the power to change the course of nature, there, under such circumstances, they may be the fitter to procure belief, by how much the more they are beyond or contrary to ordinary observation. This is the proper case of miracles, which, well attested, do not only find credit themselves, but give it also to other truths, which need such confirmation." Book iv. Chap. 16, § 13.—ED.

A DISCOURSE, &c.

To discourse of miracles without defining what one means by the word miracle, is to make a show, but in effect to talk of nothing.

A miracle, then, I take to be a sensible operation, which, being above the comprehension of the spectator, and in his opinion contrary to the established course of nature, is taken by him to be divine.

He that is present at the fact, is a spectator: he that believes the history of the fact, puts himself in the place of a spectator.

This definition, it is probable, will not escape these two exceptions:—

1. That hereby what is a miracle is made very uncertain; for it depending on the opinion of the spectator, that will be a miracle to one which will not be so to another.

In answer to which, it is enough to say, that this objection is of no force, but in the mouth of one who can produce a definition of a miracle not liable to the same exception, which I think not easy to do; for it being agreed, that a miracle must be that which surpasses the force of nature in the established, steady laws of causes and effects, nothing can be taken to be a miracle but what is judged to exceed those laws. Now every one being able to judge of those laws only by his own

acquaintance with nature, and notions of its force, (which are different in different men,) it is unavoidable that that should be a miracle to one, which is not so to another.

2. Another objection to this definition will be, that the notion of a miracle thus enlarged, may come sometimes to take in operations that have nothing extraordinary or supernatural in them, and thereby invalidate the use of miracles for the attesting of divine revelation.

To which I answer, not at all, if the testimony which divine revelation receives from miracles be rightly considered.

To know that any revelation is from God, it is necessary to know that the messenger that delivers it is sent from God; and that cannot be known but by some credentials given him by God himself. Let us see then whether miracles, in my sense, be not such credentials, and will not infallibly direct us right in the search of divine revelation.

It is to be considered, that divine revelation receives testimony from no other miracles, but such as are wrought to witness his mission from God, who delivers the revelation. All other miracles that are done in the world, how many or great soever, revelation is not concerned in. Cases wherein there has been, or can be need of miracles for the confirmation of revelation, are fewer than perhaps is imagined. The heathen world, amidst an infinite and uncertain jumble of deities, fables, and worships, had no room for a divine attestation of any one against the rest. Those owners of many gods were at liberty in their worship; and no one of their divinities pretending to be the one only true God, no one of then could be supposed, in the

Pagan scheme, to make use of miracles to establish his worship alone, or to abolish that of the other; much less was there any use of miracles to confirm any articles of faith, since no one of them had any such to propose as necessary to be believed by their votaries; and, therefore, I do not remember any miracles recorded in the Greek or Roman writers, as done to confirm any one's mission and doctrine. Conformable hereunto we find St. Paul, 1 Cor. i. 22, takes notice that the Jews (it is true) required miracles, but as for the Greeks they looked after something else; they knew no need or use there was of miracles to recommend any religion to them. And indeed it is an astonishing mark how far the god of this world had blinded men's minds, if we consider that the Gentile world received and stuck to a religion, which, not being derived from reason, had no sure foundation in revelation. They knew not its original, nor the authors of it, nor seemed concerned to know from whence it came, or by whose authority delivered; and so had no mention or use of miracles for its confirmation. For though there were here and there some pretences to revelation, yet there were not so much as pretences to miracles that attested it.

If we will direct our thoughts by what has been, we must conclude that miracles, as the credentials of a messenger delivering a divine religion, have no place but upon a supposition of one only true God: and that it is so in the nature of the thing, and cannot be otherwise, I think will be made appear in the sequel of this discourse. Of such who have come in the name of the one only true God, professing to bring a law from him, we have in history

a clear account but of three, viz., Moses, Jesus, and Mahomet. For what the Persees say of their Zoroaster, or the Indians of their Brama, (not to mention all the wild stories of the religions further east,) is so obscure, or so manifestly fabulous, that no account can be made of it. Now of the three before mentioned, Mahomet having none to produce, pretends to no miracles for the vouching his mission: so that the only revelations that come attested by miracles, being only those of Moses and Christ, and they confirming each other, the business of miracles, as it stands really in matter of fact, has no manner of difficulty in it; and I think the most scrupulous or sceptical cannot from miracles raise the least doubt against the divine revelation of the gospel.

But since the speculative and learned will be putting of cases which never were, and it may be presumed never will be; since scholars and disputants will be raising of questions where there are none, and enter upon debates whereof there is no need; I crave leave to say, that he who comes with a message from God to be delivered to the world, cannot be refused belief, if he vouches his mission by a miracle, because his credentials have a right to it. For every rational thinking man must conclude as Nicodemus did: 'We know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these signs which thou dost, except God be with him.'

For example, Jesus of Nazareth professes himself sent from God: he with a word calms a tempest at sea: this one looks on as a miracle, and consequently cannot but receive his doctrine: another thinks this might be the effect of chance, or skill in the weather, and no miracle, and so stands

out; but afterwards seeing him walk on the sea, owns that for a miracle, and believes: which yet upon another has not that force, who suspects it may possibly be done by the assistance of a spirit; but yet the same person, seeing afterwards our Saviour cure an inveterate palsy by a word, admits that for a miracle, and becomes a convert. Another overlooking it in this instance, afterwards finds a miracle in his giving sight to one born blind, or in raising the dead, or his raising himself from the dead, and so receives his doctrine as a revelation coming from God. By all which it is plain, that where the miracle is admitted, the doctrine cannot be rejected; it comes with the assurance of a divine attestation to him that allows the miracle, and he cannot question its truth.

The next thing then is, what shall be a sufficient inducement to take any extraordinary operation to be a miracle, i. e. wrought by God himself for the attestation of a revelation from him.

And to this I answer, the carrying with it the marks of a greater power than appears in opposition to it. For,

First, This removes the main difficulty where it presses hardest, and clears the matter from doubt, when extraordinary and supernatural operations are brought to support opposite missions, about which methinks more dust has been raised by men of leisure than so plain a matter needed. For since God's power is paramount to all, and no opposition can be made against him with an equal force to his; and since his honour and goodness can never be supposed to suffer his messenger and his truth to be borne down by the appearance of a greater power on the side of an impostor, and in

favour of a lie; wherever there is an opposition, and two pretending to be sent from heaven clash, the signs which carry with them the evident marks of a greater power, will always be a certain and unquestionable evidence, that the truth and divine mission are on that side on which they appear. For, though the discovery, how the lying wonders are or can be produced, be beyond the capacity of the ignorant, and often beyond the conception of the most knowing spectator, who is therefore forced to allow them, in his apprehension, to be above the force of natural causes and effects; yet he cannot but know they are not seals set by God to his truth for the attesting of it, since they are opposed by miracles that carry the evident marks of a greater and superior power, and therefore they cannot at all shake the authority of one so supported. God can never be thought to suffer that a lie, set up in opposition to a truth coming from him, should be backed with a greater power than he will show for the confirmation and propagation of a doctrine which he has revealed, to the end it might be believed. The producing of serpents, blood, and frogs, by the Egyptian sorcerers and by Moses, could not, to the spectators, but appear equally miraculous; which of the pretenders then had their mission from God, and the truth on their side, could not have been determined if the matter had rested there. But when Moses's serpent eat up theirs, when he produced lice which they could not, the decision was easy. It was plain Jannes and Jambres acted by an inferior power; and their operations, how marvellous and extraordinary soever, could not in the least bring in question Moses's mission; that stood the firmer for this opposition, and remained the

more unquestionable after this, than if no such signs had been brought against it.

So likewise the number, variety, and greatness of the miracles, wrought for the confirmation of the doctrine delivered by Jesus Christ, carry with them such strong marks of an extraordinary divine power, that the truth of his mission will stand firm and unquestionable, till any one rising up in op position to him shall do greater miracles than he and his apostles did. For any thing less will not be of weight to turn the scales in the opinion of any one, whether of an inferior or more exalted understanding. This is one of those palpable truths and trials, of which all mankind are judges; and there needs no assistance of learning, no deep thought, to come to a certainty in it. Such care has God taken that no pretended revelation should stand in competition with what is truly divine, that we need but open our eyes to see and be sure which came from him. The marks of his over-ruling power accompany it; and therefore to this day we find, that wherever the gospel comes, it prevails, to the beating down the strong holds of Satan, and the dislodging the prince of the power of darkness, driving him away with all his living wonders; which is a standing miracle, carrying with it the testimony of superiority.

What is the uttermost power of natural agents or created beings, men of the greatest reach cannot discover; but that it is not equal to God's omnipotency is obvious to every one's understanding; so that the superior power is an easy, as well as sure guide to revelation, attested by miracles, where they are brought as credentials to an embassy from God.

And thus, upon the same grounds of superiority of power, uncontested revelation will stand too.

For the explaining of which, it may be necessary to premise,

1. That no mission can be looked on to be divine, that delivers any thing derogating from the honour of the one, only true, invisible God, or inconsistent with natural religion and the rules of morality; because God having discovered to men the unity and majesty of his eternal Godhead, and the truths of natural religion and morality, by the light of reason, he cannot be supposed to back the contrary by revelation: for that would be to destroy the evidence and the use of reason, without which men cannot be able to distinguish divine revelation from diabolical imposture.

2. That it cannot be expected that God should send any one into the world on purpose to inform men of things indifferent, and of small moment, or that are knowable by the use of their natural faculties. This would be to lessen the dignity of his majesty in favour of our sloth, and in prejudice to our reason.

3. The only case then wherein a mission of any one from heaven can be reconciled to the high and awful thoughts men ought to have of the Deity, must be the revelation of some supernatural truths relating to the glory of God, and some great concern of men. Supernatural operations attesting such a revelation may with reason be taken to be miracles, as carrying the marks of a superior and overruling power, as long as no revelation accompanied with marks of a greater power appears against it. Such supernatural signs may justly stand good, and be received for divine, i. e. wrought

by a power superior to all, till a mission attested by operations of a greater force shall disprove them: because it cannot be supposed God should suffer his prerogative to be so far usurped by any inferior being, as to permit any creature, depending on him, to set his seals, the marks of his divine authority, to a mission coming from him. For these supernatural signs being the only means God is conceived to have to satisfy men, as rational creatures, of the certainty of any thing he would reveal, as coming from himself, can never consent that it should be wrested out of his hands, to serve the ends and establish the authority of an inferior agent that rivals him. His power being known to have no equal, always will, and always may be safely depended on, to show its superiority in vindicating his authority, and maintaining every truth that he hath revealed. So that the marks of a superior power accompanying it, always have been, and always will be, a visible and sure guide to divine revelation; by which men may conduct themselves in their examining of revealed religions, and be satisfied which they ought to receive as coming from God; though they have by no means ability precisely to determine what is, or is not above the force of any created being; or what operations can be performed by none but a divine power, and require the immediate hand of the Almighty. And therefore we see it is by that our Saviour measures the great unbelief of the Jews, John, xv. 24, saying, 'If I had not done among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father;' declaring, that they could not but see the power and presence of God in those

many miracles he did, which were greater than ever any other man had done. When God sent Moses to the children of Israel with a message, that now, according to his promise, he would redeem them by his hand out of Egypt, and furnished him with signs and credentials of his mission; it is very remarkable what God himself says of those signs, Exod. iv, 8: 'And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, nor hearken to the voice of the first sign (which was turning his rod into a serpent) that they will believe the voice of the latter sign;' (which was the making his hand leprous by putting it in his bosom;) God further adds, v. 9, 'And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river and pour upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land.' Which of those operations was or was not above the force of all created beings, will, I suppose, be hard for any man, too hard for a poor brick-maker, to determine; and therefore the credit and certain reception of the mission, was annexed to neither of them, but the prevailing of their attestation was heightened by the increase of their number; two supernatural operations showing more power than one, and three more than two. God allowed that it was natural, that the marks of greater power should have a greater impression on the minds and belief of the spectators. Accordingly the Jews by this estimate judged of the miracles of our Saviour, John, vii. 31, where we have this account: 'And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh will he do more miracles than these which this

man hath done?' This, perhaps, as it is the plainest, so it is also the surest way to preserve the testimony of miracles in its due force to all sorts and degrees of people. For miracles being the basis on which divine mission is always established, and consequently that foundation on which the believers of any divine revelation must ultimately bottom their faith, this use of them would be lost, if not to all mankind, yet at least to the simple and illiterate, (which is the far greatest part,) if miracles be defined to be none but such divine operations as are in themselves beyond the power of all created beings, or at least operations contrary to the fixed and established laws of nature. For as to the latter of those, what are the fixed and established laws of nature, philosophers alone, if at least they, can pretend to determine. And if they are to be operations performable only by divine power, I doubt whether any man, learned or unlearned, can, in most cases, be able to say of any particular operation that can fall under his senses, that it is certainly a miracle. Before he can come to that certainty, he must know that no created being has a power to perform it. We know good and bad angels have abilities and excellencies exceedingly beyond all our poor performances or narrow comprehensions. But to define what is the utmost extent of power that any of them has, is a bold undertaking of a man in the dark, that pronounces without seeing, and sets bounds in his narrow cell to things at an infinite distance from his model and comprehension.

Such definitions therefore of miracles, however specious in discourse and theory, fail us when we

come to use, and an application of them in particular cases.

These thoughts concerning miracles, were occasioned by my reading Mr. Fleetwood's Essay on Miracles, and the letter written to him on that subject. The one of them defining a miracle to be an extraordinary operation performable by God alone; and the other writing of miracles without any definition of a miracle at all.

THE END.

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